J. F. B. Livesay

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CANADA'S HUNDRED DAYS

A.W. Elson & Co., Belmont, Mass.

Arthur Curtis

Canada's Hundred Days

With the Canadian Corps from Amiens
to Mons, Aug. 8 - Nov. 11, 1918.

By
J. F. B. Livesay

With Portrait and Maps

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PREFACE

THIS book has been written to give the Canadian people a clearer, fuller, conception of the wonderful work of the Canadian Corps during the Hundred Days. To that consideration every other has been subordinated.

By identifying so far as possible the actual battle position of individual battalions it is hoped to stimulate local pride and interest in their respective territorial or recruiting areas. Difficulties were here encountered, both through absence of detailed official narratives and limitations of space, but if full justice has not been done each fighting unit, it is not from lack of application and goodwill.

With this prime consideration always in mind, it has been sought to make the book intelligible to the general reader as well as to the military student and pains therefore have been taken to explain at length for the former military technicalities and terminology that come within the common knowledge of the latter.

Whenever practicable the original and official sources drawn upon for description of operations have been quoted. Such may at times be a little tedious but is preferable to loose paraphrasing which, while denying the reader an inspection of the documentary evidence, makes heavy drafts upon his credulity. Thus the Official Report of the Corps Commander covering these operations has been reproduced practically in full, paralleling in its proper place the general narrative. This might be expected to make for confusion and overlapping, but in practice it has not altogether worked out that way, for whereas the Official Report deals mainly with technical aspects, the book itself seeks to clothe these with the pulsating life and color of the battlefield. The alternatives must have been either to have buried the Official Report in a lengthy Appendix, or to have omitted it altogether. It is felt the

right course has been followed because whatever the book may suffer from these occasional breaks in the story, this loss is overwhelmingly counter-balanced by placing before the reader in an accessible form this extremely valuable and compellingly interesting report, carrying with it the authority of an authenticated historic document.

Among official or semi-official narratives of which free use has been made are those of the 1st Canadian Division, the 4th Canadian Division, the 4th Canadian Infantry Brigade, as well as several battalion narratives. Valuable material has been drawn from the narrative of the First Army, published by the London *Times,* entitled, "The Final Blow of the First Army in 1918."

The author is greatly indebted to a number of friends of all ranks in the Canadian Corps for information and suggestions. Special acknowledgement must be made of the very efficient work of Lieut. J. I. P. Neal, Canadian Corps Survey Section, who throughout these operations superintended the Corp Maps Section, and has now prepared the accompanying maps and plans.

WINNIPEG, CANADA,
AUG. 26, 1919.

J.F.B.L.

AMIENS

AMIENS

CHAPTER I

THE SITUATION ON THE WEST FRONT

ON July 18, 1918, Marshal Foch, supported by new American levies, struck his hammer blow on the Marne. We shall hear a good deal in history of Chateau Thierry and the great victory, but it remains that at the end of July the West Front—the traditional West Front of Flanders, Picardy and the Somme—was intact, unpierced, to all seeming an impregnable wall built by German blood and iron. But it was not the line of 1917. The spring offensive had cramped its defenders into a narrower, a more perilous ring. In the north the enemy bivouacked on the field of Passchendaele and from Mount Kemmel cast his shadow over the Channel ports; to the south he was knocking at the gate of Amiens and thrusting through Montdidier at Paris; only in the centre, at Souchez, on Vimy Ridge and before Arras, where through all those fateful days of March and April the Canadian Corps had kept watch and guard, the line of 1917 stood firm.

There is abundant evidence that at the end of July, while the enemy regarded the situation in the south as serious and was preparing to admit that his last great offensive had failed, he still held the West Front—the Somme, the Hindenburg Line and the valley of the Lys—to be invincible, and counted on the British armies frittering away their strength upon its formidable defenses as they had in 1916 and 1917. Further than that, he had actually in preparation a new offensive on the Amiens-Montdidier front with which he hoped to restore the military balance in his favor. It was only after the Battle

of Amiens, in which the Canadian Corps took so glorious and leading a part, that he began to despair.

Ludendorff clearly admits this in his book. "The defeat of our arms on Aug. 8 in the Franco-British offensive near Albert and north of Montdidier finally resulted in our losing hope for a military victory," he writes. "Conferences were held with Chancellor von Hertling, Admiral von Hintz, the foreign minister, and Field Marshal von Hindenburg, on Aug. 14, 15 and 16, and there was also a meeting of the Crown Council at which I clearly stated that the war could not be won militarily."

The "kick-off" of Aug. 8 at Amiens was the first general offensive attempted by the British armies in 1918, and the events leading up to it must be briefly rehearsed in order to get a true strategic picture. This can best be done in the words of Field-Marshal Haig, as contained in his famous "Victory Dispatch" of Dec. 21, 1918. After describing the weakened condition of the forces at his command following the enemy offensive, he says:—"The German attacks, though they had failed to break the Allied line, had stretched the resources of the Allies to the uttermost; while before Amiens and Hazebrouck they had brought the enemy within a short distance of strategic points of great importance. In these circumstances the possibility of an immediate renewal of the enemy's offensive could not but be viewed with grave anxiety. . . .

"At the commencement of the period under review, early in May, the Allied High Command repeatedly expressed the opinion that the enemy would renew his attack on a large scale on the front Arras-Amiens-Montdidier. The strategic results to be obtained by the capture of Amiens, the separation of the French and British armies, and an advance toward the sea along the valley of the Somme, were very great, and might well have proved decisive. The enemy's opening offensive (in March and April) had already brought him within a measurable distance of success in this direction, and had carried his armies through practically the whole of our organized lines of defense. . . .

"In short, the enemy still possessed a sufficient superiority of force to retain the initiative, and it was known he would be compelled to act within a comparatively limited time if he were to turn his superiority to account before it passed from him. These were the two main factors which had to be taken into consideration when deciding the policy of the British armies during the late spring and early summer. The common object of the French and ourselves was to tide over the period which must elapse until the growth of the American armies and the arrival of Allied reinforcements placed the opposing forces once more on a footing of equality."

The situation was an anxious one, but, as it turned out, the enemy was in no condition to push a new offensive and when it did come at last he elected for a direct thrust at Paris from the Aisne front. Launched at the end of May, this great offensive swept steadily on until, despite the desperate resistance of the French, reinforced by British and American troops, the Marne was reached, and it culminated on July 15 with the opening east and south-west of Rheims of what was to prove the last enemy blow on the grand scale. On July 18 Foch struck his shattering counter-stroke.

Meanwhile the British armies on the West Front had been engaged in what Field-Marshal Haig describes as a period of active defense. This included local attacks, the building of a new system of railways behind Amiens, and the digging of five thousand miles of trench. The lesson of the necessity for great depth of defense had been hardly learned in March.

Coming to July he says: "Two months of comparative quiet worked a great change in the condition of the British armies. The drafts sent out from England had largely been absorbed, many of the reinforcements from abroad had already arrived, and the number of our effective infantry divisions had risen from forty-five to fifty-two (this in addition to nine British divisions engaged on the Marne). In artillery we were stronger than we had ever been."

As a consequence we entered early in June on more ambit-

ious local offensive operations, in which the Australians had a considerable share. "By the end of July," he goes on, "the reconstitution of the British armies had been completed, and the success of their various local operations had had a good effect. I had once more at my command an effective striking force, capable of taking the offensive with every hope of success when the proper moment should arrive."

That moment now approached. "At a conference held on July 23," Field-Marshal Haig writes, "when the success of the attack of July 18 was well assured, the methods by which the advantage already gained could be extended were discussed in detail. The Allied Commander-in-Chief asked that the British, French and American Armies should each prepare plans for local offensives, to be taken in hand as soon as possible, with certain definite objectives of a limited nature. These objectives on the British front were the disengagement of Amiens and the freeing of the Paris-Amiens railway by an attack on the Albert-Montdidier front. The role of the French and American armies was to free other strategic railways by operations farther South and East. . . .

"It would depend upon the nature of the success which might be obtained in these different Allied operations whether they could be more fully exploited before winter set in. It was subsequently arranged that attacks would be pressed in a converging direction towards Mezieres by the French and American armies, while at the same time the British armies, attacking towards the line St. Quentin-Cambrai, would strike directly at the vital lateral communications running through Maubeuge to Hirson and Mezieres, by which alone the German forces on the Champagne front could be supplied and maintained."

Such a movement would also threaten the group of German armies in Flanders, and, therefore, "it was obviously of vital importance to the enemy to maintain intact his front opposite St. Quentin and Cambrai, and for this purpose he depended upon the great fortified zone known as the Hindenburg Line."

It is necessary to keep this in mind, as it is the key to the extraordinary fierce resistance the enemy maintained throughout the critical days of the Battle of Cambrai.

Summing up the general scheme of British operations, Field-Marshal Haig says: "The brilliant success of the Amiens attack was the prelude to a great series of battles, in which, throughout three months of continuous fighting, the British armies advanced without a check from one victory to another."

This period was divided into two well-defined phases, the first being the breaking through of the Hindenburg Line, and the second the pushing of the enemy before us from his hastily prepared defenses. "The second phase had already reached its legitimate conclusion when the signing of the armistice put an end to the operations. Finally defeated in the great battles of Nov. 1 and 4, and utterly without reserves, the enemy at that date was falling back without coherent plan and in widespread disorder and confusion."

CHAPTER II

THE CANADIAN CORPS READY FOR BATTLE

IT is the purpose of this book to trace the leading part the Canadian Corps played in the Battle of Amiens and in the subsequent great offensives that carried it from Arras through the Drocourt-Queant Line, across the Canal du Nord, over the stricken field of Cambrai, and thence to Valenciennes and Mons. In those proud days of victory, no less than in the long stern years of trench warfare, it lived up to its great reputation. Its deeds speak for themselves. As that tried soldier, the King of the Belgians, remarked in Mons, there is no corps in Europe of higher renown. In the words of its commander Sir Arthur Currie: "In the last two years of strenuous fighting the Canadian Corps never lost a gun, never failed to take its objective, and has never been driven from a foot of ground it has once consolidated."

What was the Canadian Corps doing in the spring and summer of 1918? Little was heard of it during the great spring drive, nor through May, June and July. People at home were asking what was the matter. Had it not yet got over its bloody wounds of Passchendaele? Was it not to be thrown in to stiffen the weakening line? On Aug. 8 it was to burst again upon their consciousness almost with the force of a blow.

After the hard-won victory of Passchendaele in October, 1917, the Canadian Corps returned to its old line before Lens and on Vimy Ridge, where an offensive had been planned just before it had been moved north. Corps Headquarters returned to Comblain l'Abbe and remained there throughout the winter and spring months, the time being employed in holding and strengthening the Vimy front and in assimilating reinforcements to make good the wastage. When the March offensive

came, it was anticipated that the attack would develop north of Arras, and the sector became vitally important because if this pivot of our defense went, there might be no stopping short of the sea.

Behind this there was another vital consideration. This story may be apocryphal—it does not matter, for in essence it is true. Foch was asked to use the Canadian Corps to stem the tide of invasion. "No," came the reply—so the story goes—"I cannot afford to do that. By their valor the Canadian troops won back at Vimy the most valuable of our remaining coal fields. These are the nerve centre of France. We cannot afford to entrust their defense out of the hands of my Canadians."

In his despatch of July 8, 1918, Sir Douglas Haig wrote that behind Vimy Ridge "lay the northern collieries of France and certain tactical features which cover our lateral communications. Here . . . little or no ground could be given up." In the same connection the Canadian Corps Commander, Sir Arthur Currie, in his Interim Report on the operations of the Corps during 1918, writes: "A comparative shallow advance beyond the Vimy Ridge would have stopped the operation of the collieries, paralysing the production of war material in France. . . On the other hand, a deep penetration at that point, by bringing the Amiens-Bethune railway and main road under fire, would have placed the British Army in a critical position by threatening to cut it in two and by depriving it of vital lateral communication. The tactical and strategical results to be gained by a moderate success at that point were so far reaching in effect that, notwithstanding the natural difficulties confronting an attack on that sector, it was fully expected (*i.e.,* before the March offensive developed) that the German offensive would be directed against this, the central part of the British front."

He goes on to tell of the great defensive works built up by the Canadian Corps on the Vimy front during the winter in anticipation of the 1918 enemy spring drive, a story of interest

in itself, but not to be described in detail here. It must suffice to say that if the blow had fallen in this sector the result would have been far different to what befell at St. Quentin.

After March 21 the pressure became very great and there was a tendency to throw in Divisions of the Canadian Corps wherever needed. "Thus, under the pressure of circumstances," writes Sir Arthur Currie of the situation at the end of March, "the four Canadian Divisions were to be removed from my command, placed in two different armies (Third and First), and under command of three different Corps (VI, XVII and XIII). This disposition of the Canadian troops was not satisfactory, and on receipt of the orders above referred to I made strong representation to First Army, and offered suggestions which to my mind would reconcile my claims (from the standpoint of Canadian policy) with the tactical and administrative requirements of the moment."

As a consequence the 1st., 3rd. and 4th. Canadian Divisions were reunited under his command and given a very extended line. "From April 10 until relieved (May 7) the Corps held a line exceeding 29,000 yards in length; the 2nd. Canadian Division, then with the VI Corps, was holding 6,000 yards of front, making a total length of 35,000 yards of front by the four Canadian Divisions. The total length of the line held by the British Army between the Oise and the sea was approximately 100 miles; therefore the Canadian troops were holding approximately one-fifth of the total front. Without wishing to draw from this fact any exaggerated conclusion, it is pointed out that although the Canadian Corps did not, during this period, have to repulse any German attacks on its front, it nevertheless played a part worthy of its strength during that period."

But although the Canadian Infantry did not take active part in repelling the great enemy drive, its other arms were worthily represented. At 11 p.m. on the night of March 22-23, in the blackest hours of the Somme fighting, word came to Canadian Corps Headquarters for the 1st. Canadian Motor

Machine-Gun Brigade, then in the line on the Vimy sector, to be withdrawn and move south to the Fifth Army area. By the following midnight all its batteries were in action on a 35-mile front east of Amiens, having travelled over 100 miles during the day.

Sir Arthur Currie describes its activities as follows:—"The 1st. C.M.M.G. Brigade (Lt.-Col. W. K. Walker), under orders of the Fifth and later of the Fourth Army, was ordered to fight a rearguard action to delay the advance of the enemy and to fill dangerous gaps on the Army fronts. For 19 days that Unit was continuously in action north and south of the Somme, fighting against overwhelming odds. Using to the utmost its great mobility, it fought over 200 square miles of territory. It is difficult to appraise to its correct extent the influence, material and moral, that the 40 machine-guns of that Unit had in the events which were then taking place. The losses amounted to about 75 per cent. of the trench strength of the Unit, and to keep it in being throughout that fighting, I authorized its reinforcement by personnel of the Infantry branch of the Canadian Machine-Gun Corps."

Fighting over the same ground, and with equal gallantry, was the Canadian Cavalry Brigade, attached to the British Cavalry Corps. The brilliant work of both arms in the desperate and successful effort to stem the enemy hordes will ever be a proud chapter in Canadian military annals.

On May 7 the Canadian Corps, with the exception of the 2nd. Canadian Division, still in the line in the Third Army area, was relieved and placed in General Headquarters Reserve in the First Army area. This movement is explained by the *Times* History as follows:—"After consultation with the Commanders of the First and Second Armies at the more northern portions of our line, it was determined that each should contribute what divisions could be spared to form a General Reserve for the British Army for use where it might be required. The Canadian Corps formed part of this force and was intended for counter-attack in case the enemy broke

through the British front. Its place of assembly was in front of Amiens."

Early in May Canadian Corps Headquarters moved to Pernes and on May 25 to Bryas. There followed a period of intensive training in the tactics of the offensive, the three divisions not in the line being concentrated in the area Monchy Breton-Lignereuil-Le Cauroy-Dieval-Auchel-Chateau de la Haie. While they are there we may enquire briefly into the causes that led to the recognition of the Canadians as a 'corps d'elite,' to be used as storm or shock troops in desperate or critical adventures.

Canada's first contingent has been described as a mob of amateur soldiers passionately inspired to give their all for a great cause. Discipline was lax, the officers unproved, and though the stuff was there, it took time to transmute it into the perfect fighting machine it became. Take the simple matter of saluting. To men of democratic birth and habit of mind, saluting had in it something of kow-tow—to the young officer it seemed an insult to his men, the tried comrades of his civil life, and they in turn might resent the implication of a social distinction that had no existence in fact. And so, for long, saluting was a perfunctory affair.

But there came certain officers who explained patiently and carefully that saluting was of the essence of military life—that the constant exercise it affords of vigilance and smartness is part and parcel of the making of a good soldier. At the end of the war there was no smarter saluting in the British Army than that of the Canadians, as there were no better marching regiments, no superior Staff work, no alerter Intelligence, nor more scientific gunnery.

The Canadian Corps owes an immense debt to its former Commander, Sir Julian Byng, who first welded it into a perfectly co-ordinated fighting machine, knit together in spirit and applying to all its problems and difficulties the idea of a common loyalty to the Corps. It was not long when in the shock of battle the Canadian Corps came into a full apprecia-

tion of its own strength and superiority over the foe. Passchendaele had been the last of these occasions. On that field fell many brave young Canadians, but the Corps went on to victory, not daunted by loss nor unduly elated by success.

A number of special causes contributed to the pre-eminence of the Canadian Corps—"As good as the old Guards," they said in London. One was that it was at full strength throughout. Where owing to the waste of war other Corps were obliged to cut down the number of their bayonets, the Canadian Corps always maintained its forty-eight Battalions of Infantry, divided into twelve Brigades and four Divisions, with unusual strength in Artillery and Corps Troops. Right up to the Battle of Cambrai reinforcements of trained men were always forthcoming, and this proved the wisdom which resisted proposals to create the 5th. Canadian Infantry Division, and then a sixth, with the ultimate prospect of two weak Corps of three Divisions each. By a rather happy chance this proposal went so far as the actual formation in the depots in England of the 5th. Division, whose trained units proved highly valuable reinforcements, while the 5th. Canadian Divisional Artillery was brought over to France intact and thus the Canadian Corps had at its disposal no less than five artillery divisions, besides a number of heavy artillery brigades, throughout these operations.

Much of the success during the intensive fighting to follow was due to the great strengthening the Canadian Corps received during the winter and spring of 1918. On Aug. 8 the Corps went into action stronger numerically than any other Corps in Europe. How this was brought about, and in face of what dangers, is best explained in Sir Arthur Currie's own words:—"At this time (*i.e.*, the winter of 1917-18) the British Army was undergoing far-reaching alterations in its organization. The situation as regards man-power appeared to be such that, in order to maintain in the field the same number of Divisions, it was necessary to reorganize the Infantry Brigades from a four-battalion basis to a three-battalion basis. . . .

Although the situation of the Canadians regarding reinforcements appeared to be satisfactory so long as the number of Divisions in the field was not increased, a proposal was made to adopt an organization similar to the British, that is, to reduce the number of Battalions in the Canadian Infantry Brigades from four to three. Concurrently with this change, it was proposed to increase the number of Canadian Divisions in the field from four to six.

"I did not think that this proposal was warranted by our experience in the field, and I was quite certain that, owing to the severity of the losses suffered in modern battles, the manpower of Canada was not sufficient to meet the increased exposure to casualties consequent on the increased number of Canadian Divisions in the field.

"I represented very strongly my views to the Minister, Overseas Military Forces of Canada, and, on further consideration, it was decided to drop this project and to accept instead my counter-proposal, viz., to increase the establishment of the Canadian Infantry Battalion by 100 of all ranks, to proceed with the reorganization of the Engineers and Machine-Gun Services, and to grant the various amendments suggested by establishments of other Arms and Branches. I am glad to be able to say that my proposals regarding the reorganization of Engineer Services, Machine-Guns, etc., as well as the increase of strength of the Infantry Battalions, received the favorable consideration and support of the Commander-in-Chief."

Commenting on this, the Canadian Overseas Minister, Sir Edward Kemp, says:—"The Canadian Corps in the existing formation had proved itself a smooth-running machine of tremendous striking power, and any radical alteration in its constitution might have resulted in a reduction of such power without any compensating advantages. At a time of national crisis, such as that in the spring of 1918, it would not have been permissible to allow sentiment to stand in the way of any change likely to further the common cause. Every soldier would have been prepared to sacrifice the pride which he had

in his particular Brigade and in the Corps as a whole. At the same time it should be a matter of deep gratification to all Canadians that, for practical reasons, it was possible to avert what, from a sentimental point of view, would have almost amounted to a national calamity, namely, the breaking up of a Corps, which as such had gained a unique position among the armies of the Western Front."

For six Divisions meant two weak Corps instead of one strong one. It must have meant loss of that corps spirit that made the Canadian Corps a thing apart. More valuable even than its material strength was the fact that it was perhaps the only corps in the British Army to maintain its identity throughout all its units—its Divisions, its Brigades, its Battalions, its leaders, its staff and the whole body of officers and rank and file. Other Corps had little about them permanent but their name and their staff. They became the clearing-house for Divisions brought from all quarters, used for a special purpose, and then removed elsewhere. This resulted inevitably in lack of corps spirit, so conspicuously present throughout the Canadian Corps.

The average Canadian citizen thinks in terms of the "Canadian Forces," or the "Canadian Army"; he does not appreciate just how every Canadian soldier cherishes the idea of the "Canadian Corps." It may serve to make the point clear by quoting from the report of Sir Edward Kemp referred to above. "The word 'Corps' is an abbreviation of the term 'Army Corps,' and at present is a very uncertain and indefinite military term. In the military sense to-day it means a formation consisting of a Headquarters, from two to six Divisions, and a varying number of Corps Troops composed of all arms, and is ordinarily commanded by a Lieutenant-General. Army Corps in the British Army during this war have never been stable units, varying month by month (and often day by day) as to their composition, Division and Corps Troops being very frequently transferred from corps to corps.

"The Units composing the Canadian Corps have, however,

been so far fortunate as to have been mostly under the same Commander and administered by the same staffs. Canadian Units and Formations have been taught to look upon themselves as belonging to the Canadian Corps, and whilst away from the Corps have been spoken of as being attached to other Corps; and in consequence a very true 'esprit de corps' has sprung up amongst all Canadian Units administered by the Canadian Corps Headquarters."

We have seen how the Corps Commander fought hard to preserve the Corps as an entity. It meant something more than a hundred thousand men or so of all arms. In illustration a little digression may be permitted. At a later day a certain infantry unit had the honor of first entering Cambrai. A newspaper correspondent proceeded to congratulate a company officer on the work of his battalion. "Don't say that," he said. "It isn't the Fifth Canadian Mounted Rifles; it isn't even the Eighth Brigade or the Third Canadian Division—it's the good old Corps that's captured Cambrai; you know our motto, 'One for all and all for one.'" There was something rather fine about this at such an hour, when men's emotions run high, but it was the instinctive spirit of the Canadian soldier.

CHAPTER III

FROM ARRAS TO AMIENS

THE Canadian Corps was fortunate that it had in Sir Arthur Currie a chief it both loved and trusted, a brilliant citizen soldier it was proud to follow anywhere. But its greatest asset lay in the unconquerable spirit of the rank and file, bred to free open skies, adaptable to changing circumstances, seasoned by many battles, inured to hardship, submitting willingly to stern discipline—thus transmuting these clerks, artisans, lawyers, farmers, railway-men, lumber-jacks and the like, into as fine a body of professional troops this war has produced—but troops that all so happily sought only in victory the hour to lay aside the sword and return to the plowshare.

And now before them was a splendid adventure. On July 1, the 2nd. Canadian Division was at last relieved from the line, the 3rd. Canadian Division taking its place. It had passed under orders of the VI Corps on March 28, relieving the 3rd. British Division in the Neuville Vitasse Sector just south of Arras, and on the night of March 31 extended its front southwards by relieving the left battalion of the Guards' Division. The front held extended from south of the Cojeul river, east of Boisleux St. Marc, to the slopes of Telegraph Hill, 6,000 yards. The 2nd. Canadian Division held this front for an uninterrupted period of 92 days, during which time it repulsed a series of local attacks and carried out no less than 27 raids, capturing three officers, 101 other ranks, 22 machine-guns, and two trench-mortars, and inflicting severe casualties on the enemy. The aggressive attitude adopted by this Division during those critical days and under such adverse conditions had a most excellent effect on the troops generally, and it certainly reduced to the lowest point the fighting value of

two German Divisions, namely, the 26th. Reserve Division and the 185th. Division.

On June 30, when the 2nd. Canadian Division was about to leave the Third Army Command, General Byng sent the following letter to Maj.-General Sir Henry Burstall:—"I cannot allow the 2nd. Canadian Division to leave the Third Army without expressing my appreciation of the splendid work it has done. Knowing the Division of old, I had great anticipations of offensive action and thorough field defense work. These anticipations were more than realised and the 2nd. Canadians have now added another page of lasting record to their history. I can only hope that they are as proud of their work as I was of again having them under my command."

It returned under orders of the Canadian Corps on Dominion Day, but its rest was brief, for on July 6 the Canadian Corps was warned to be prepared to relieve the XVII Corps in the line, being released from G. H. Q. Reserve on July 10 and completing the relief by July 15. Disposition at that time was as follows:—

Headquarters Canadian Corps, Duisans (First Army Area); 2nd. Canadian Division, in the line, Telegraph Hill Section; 1st. Canadian Division, in the line, Feuchy-Fampoux Section; 4th. Canadian Division, in the line, Gavrelle-Oppy Section.

Under VI Corps. (Third Army Area).

3rd. Canadian Division, in the line, Neuville-Vitasse Section.

The general policy adopted was to foster in the mind of the enemy the idea of a pending attack in order to retain or draw his reserves into this area, and consequently active patrolling was carried out by day and night and raids were constantly engaged in. The artillery executed a vigorous programme of harassing fire and counter-battery work. From prisoners it was learned that the enemy expected an attack and that troops had been frequently rushed forward to defend the Drocourt-Queant Line.

On July 20 the Corps Commander was informed of the plan for the Amiens offensive. Then came the admirable piece of work that led the enemy to believe the Corps was going to Flanders. To quote Sir Douglas Haig:—"Preliminary instructions to prepare to attack east of Amiens at an early date had been given to the Fourth Army Commander, General Sir Henry Rawlinson, on July 13, and on July 28 the French First Army, under General Debeney, was placed by Marshal Foch under my orders for this operation. Further to strengthen my attack, I decided to reinforce the British Fourth Army with the Canadian Corps, and also with the two British divisions which were then held in readiness astride the Somme. In order to deceive the enemy and ensure the maximum effect of a surprise attack, elaborate precautions were taken to mislead him as to our intentions and to conceal our real purpose. Instructions of a detailed character were issued to the formations concerned, calculated to make it appear that a British attack in Flanders was imminent. Canadian battalions were put into line on the Kemmel front, where they were identified by the enemy. Corps headquarters were prepared, and casualty clearing stations were erected in conspicuous positions in this area."

So much depended on the secrecy of the movement and in the deception of the enemy that the precautions taken were very elaborate. "On July 21," says Sir Arthur Currie, "I attended a conference at Fourth Army Headquarters, where the operations contemplated were discussed. The Fourth Army Commander dwelt upon the importance of secrecy. . . The operation as outlined at the conference was of limited scope, and was designed to relieve the pressure on Amiens and free the Amiens-Paris railway line, thus improving the situation at the junction of the French and British Armies. A large number of Tanks were to be made available for this operation. The methods for maintaining secrecy and misleading the enemy were discussed. I pointed out that I had been considering a scheme for the capture of Orange Hill

(east of Arras), and it was agreed it would help materially to deceive *everybody* if preparations for this scheme were still continued. . .

"The following day a conference of Divisional Commanders and members of the Corps Staff was held at Canadian Corps Headquarters, where the outline of the scheme for the capture of Orange Hill was explained, and the Divisional Commanders and heads of branches and services concerned were asked to make all preparations for this attack as quickly as possible. It was stated that Tanks would be available for the operation and it was therefore essential that all concerned should familiarize themselves with the combined tactics of Infantry and Tanks. I explained that demonstrations had been arranged with the Australians and that it was my wish that the greatest possible number of officers should witness them.

"In the meantime the enemy was to be harassed on the whole Canadian Corps front by Artillery and Machine-Gun fire, and numerous raids were to be carried out to secure positive identifications (thus leading the enemy to anticipate an early attack in force). Further conferences were held from time to time at the Fourth Army Headquarters, where plans were made for the necessary reliefs and moves, and the necessity of the maintenance of secrecy emphasized.

"On July 26 the Fourth Army Commander stated that the plans originally put forward, and which had been approved by the Commander-in-Chief, had been modified by Marshal Foch, in that the First French Army would now co-operate with the Fourth British Army and be responsible for the right flank of the attack. On July 27 the general boundaries and the objectives of the first day were fixed, and movements of the Canadian Corps and Tank Units were arranged. It was decided notably that Units were to leave their areas without knowing their destinations, and that it would be given out freely that the Canadian Corps was moving to the Ypres front, where the Second Army expected a German attack.

"With a view to deceiving the enemy, two battalions of the

Canadian Corps were to be put in the line in the Kemmel area, and two Canadian Casualty Clearing Stations were to be moved to the Second Army area. Canadian Wireless and Power Buzzer Sections were to be despatched to the Kemmel Sector, and messages were to be sent worded so as to permit the enemy to decipher the identity of the senders.

"Meanwhile the Canadian Divisions were busy preparing their scheme of attack on Orange Hill, and numerous Tanks were ostentatiously assembled in the vicinity of St. Pol. . . On July 29 the XVII Corps was ordered by First Army to relieve the Canadian Corps in the line during the nights of July 31-Aug. 2, reliefs to be completed by daylight on Aug. 2. . . This Army order stated plainly that the Canadian Corps would be prepared to move to Second Army, which, as indicated above, was then holding the northern section of the British front.

"The 27th. Canadian Infantry Battalion and the 4th. Canadian Mounted Rifle Battalion respectively, from the 2nd. and 3rd. Canadian Divisions, were moved by strategical train to Second Army area where they were placed in the line. They did not rejoin their Divisions until Aug. 6. On this day, July 29, the Canadian Divisional Commanders were personally informed of the operations which were to take place on the Fourth Army Front, and they were instructed not to discuss the operations with any of their subordinate Commanders. On July 30 Canadian Corps Headquarters moved to Molliens-Vidame, and the transfer of the Canadian Corps from First Army area to Fourth Army area began.

"When this move was well under way and in order to continue to deceive our troops as to their eventual employment, a letter issued by First Army was repeated to all Canadian Divisions and communicated by them to their formations and Units, stating that the Canadian Corps was being transferred to the Fourth Army area, where it would be held in G. H. Q. Reserve and be prepared in case of attack to:—

"1. Move south at short notice to assist the French on the Rheims-Soissons front.

"2. Support either the First French Army or the Fourth British Army."

It has seemed worth while to describe these measures at length for in their result they furnished the greatest surprise attack of the war. There were some curious developments. Certain foreign officers, attached for liason purposes to the Canadian Corps, hurried north to secure good billets at the new Corps Headquarters. An indignant message came to British G. H. Q .from the Belgian G. H. Q. staff to the effect that the Canadian Corps was being moved to Belgian territory without notice of any kind, whereas common courtesy should have suggested that the Belgian Army be notified in order that it might be in a position to make arrangements for the comfort and well-being of the Canadian troops.

Necessarily the destination was a profound secret, and officers of even high rank within the Corps who knew it might be counted on the fingers. One by one the Divisions moved, roundabout routes being followed, and, until it developed the general direction was south, the men for the most part thought they were going back to the Salient. Thus at the end of July the 3rd. Canadian Division came out of the line and moved west to the vicinity of Doullens, where it entrained under sealed orders, battalion commanders even not knowing whether they were going north, south, east or west.

As an example of how it was done, the 8th. Brigade, C. M. R., detrained at Prouzel and marched that night to Hebecourt, where they lay hid next day, marching the following night to the Bois de Boves, west of the Avre, arriving on Aug. 2, the rest of the division being behind them. On that night they moved up into the Gentelles trench system, behind the Australian support line, where there was accommodation for a large body of troops. Absolutely no movement was permitted during the day, not a single man being allowed out of the trenches and dug-outs, except for reconnaissance. The 7th. and 9th. Brigades joined the 8th. on Aug. 6. All roads were packed, the brigade taking five hours to get from Boves to Gentelles Wood—an hour and a half's march.

Even the confidential men employed with the Corps General Staff were equally mystified. Corps Headquarters was at Duisans when early in the morning of July 30 they were ordered to prepare for an immediate move. There was much speculation. Some declared it was to Kemmel, others to Soissons; while one ingenious theory was that the Canadian Corps was to be shipped to Zeebrugge there to fall on the enemy rear in Flanders. The long train of sixty or seventy lorries moved off with no other guide than a transport officer on a motor cycle who declined to talk. That evening Corps Headquarters was established at Molliens-Vidame—better known to the Canadian soldier as "Molly-be-damned"—a dozen miles due west of Amiens.

There followed a week of strenuous preparation. "Red tabs" are not popular in the army but no one who watched the staff officers of the Canadian Corps then and through the overcharged weeks to follow could have anything but admiration and wonder. There is no Sunday in the army; and there are no specified hours, except that a man works until he can see no more, catches a few hours sleep, and goes at it again; fourteen hours a day week in and week out was quite normal; in active operations officers of the General Staff and "A" and "Q" branches would work right through the 24 hours. All had not the wonderful physique of the Corps Commander whom one left studying battle reports at two in the morning and heard at breakfast that he had been in the field at six o'clock.

It was a breathless bustle at "Molly-be-damned," not least so for the staff of the Canadian Artillery, which had to work out in detail the ranges and the barrage of the great opening show. Then the Intelligence branch had the collection and collation of last-minute information, whether from our air craft or by prisoners. Three clerks of the General Staff worked in a tent by themselves—all were under canvas and it rained a good deal—engaged day and night in copying out operation orders, which in great detail must all be prepared and in the hands of the various commanders. These three

clerks for a whole week led the life of Trappist monks, refusing converse with their fellows. Finally about noon of a Thursday—"Come Sergeant, tell us when the show is to open, that's a good fellow," one wheedler petitioned. "The show opened at twenty minutes past four this morning and by now we are 6,000 yards inside the Boche lines."

On Aug. 7 the first echelon of Corps Headquarters moved to Dury, a village on the Paris road three miles south of Amiens. A faint buzzing went round among the messes that there would be an attack within the next day or two—Friday was generally selected. That afternoon the Corps Commander, Sir Arthur Currie, had a talk with the two Canadian correspondents. Before him was a large scale map and the barrage map. It was all very clear and lucid. We take up our line here; our first objective is there; "zero" hour was named (and this of course a dead secret from all but the privileged few); our final objective for the day over there—constituting a world record for a first day's advance!

One was struck with the speaker's simplicity and his quiet confidence and certainty. He, of course, knew the Canadian Corps and what it could do. It was a finely tempered weapon. It had been proved before in the tightest corners—in the Somme, at Vimy, and more recently at Passchendaele, where it had gone in and conquered; gone in against the better judgment and advice of the Corps Commander himself—but gone in where others had failed, to win.

And now added to this war experience were the long patient intensive months of preparation; the knowledge that the artillery support was to be the greatest known; and that all units went into the field actually over strength, with ample reinforcements on the spot to make good casualties. He knew his men—oh, abundantly he knew them and trusted them; he knew, too, their leaders, from the Divisional Commanders down to the platoons, and had the assurance there would be no botching.

And yet when all this was admitted there was something

astonishing in this calm certainty; for our Intelligence people had it straight the enemy was massed in that very sector for a new offensive—had they not but the day before attacked in force the III Corps immediately north of the Somme? In all the history of the West Front nothing so ambitious had been proposed, let alone accomplished. The biggest things in which the Canadian Corps had been engaged were but small affairs beside this; and then there was the memory of other shows that had promised great things but had turned out but half-successes or flat failures, had we but had the courage to admit as much.

But confidence of that kind is infectious. After the talk was over we agreed on our luck in being in for the biggest thing yet.

CHAPTER IV

THE BATTLE OPENS

SO at last all is ready. The story goes that the Corps Commander was asked how soon could he deliver the Corps in fighting trim at the appointed place. "By the tenth," he had said. "Too long; do it by the eighth." And he did it; an epic feat.

It meant hardship. Some units only reached the ground to go straight into action. But everything was there. Every field battery in place, with ammunition to burn; all the imperial "heavies"; the tanks, great and small; cavalry, supply columns, signallers, ambulances—everything.

And it was all done secretly and by night. For an entire week the men of Canada were passing south from their old front, taking circuitous and puzzling routes. None knew where they went. They moved by night, sleeping by day, without gossip or undue curiosity. That was essential to the greatest surprise attack the war had produced. They were going into a fight, and they were ready. They sang as they marched—a thing they had not done for two years.

Foremost that night of nights was one's sense of wonder at how it had been done; how, by many tangled threads of railway and lorry and march, all that great and intricate machine —more complex far than Wellington had gathered on the field of Waterloo—had been assembled in perfect order to the minute.

From Canadian Corps Headquarters at Dury a cross-road runs through St. Fuscien and thence downhill into Boves, where we pass over the Avre. Except for a scurrying despatch-rider, all traffic is going the one way—miles on miles of lorries and dark masses of marching men. The night presents a sky clear and starry, with light just sufficient to illumine

the track and silhouette the regulated avenues of trees inseparable from a French highway. Far above is the drone of our air craft. "Heine" is not over, or the curious scene could scarce escape his attention. The white roads are chequered with moving oblongs of black. All Canada is on the march.

So down a steep hill into the interminable street of Boves that leads at length to the Avre. It is a puny stream, its ancient stone bridge no bigger than a good-sized western culvert. Later on our men are to bathe in the Luce, waist deep in its biggest pool. These rivers are poor affairs but they have been inscribed by the blood of her sons upon the roll of Canada's history. Their trickling streams turn decrepit mill-wheels, but their names march on down the generations—the Somme, the Avre, the Luce, the Scarpe, the Cojeul, the Sensee, the Scheldt, the Souchez or the Lys.

On the far side lies the hamlet of St. Nicholas and thence it is a long climb over chalk uplands to the wood of Gentelles. Up the winding hill go all the impedimenta of war—marching battalions, traction-engines towing great guns, ammunition trains, long lines of Red Cross lorries; everywhere the pungent odor of petrol. From every little wood belch forth men. They march silently. They might be phantoms, dim hordes of Valhalla, were it not for the spark of a cigarette, a smothered laugh. There is no talking. All is tense excitement. For miles and miles in a wide concentric sweep every road and lane and bypath is crowded with these slow-moving masses. Over the bare hillsides lumber the heavy tanks, just keeping pace with the marching men. Should the enemy of a sudden lay down a barrage, our losses must be appalling—sheep for the slaughter.

On these light chalky uplands the recent rain has drained away and the going is good. At length, somewhat footsore, we pass through a gaunt village—unhappy Gentelles—where stars shine down through skeleton rafters and all is ruin. Presently the troops are defiling into their appointed place, the Australian support line. For Australian units still man the

trenches in front of us, lest an enemy raid give the show away. So rigid have been the precautions that none of the Canadian officers and men on leave have been recalled. Not for days later do some staff officers rejoin their headquarters, a bitter disappointed lot. Berlin thinks we are in Flanders; London that we are in the south. All is well.

The sky is clear and empty. Only the stars shine down. These and an occasional flicker in the east and the long-delayed rumble of a bursting shell. For against the eastern horizon is the usual pyrotechnic of trench warfare—neither more nor less. Once every few minutes one of our heavy howitzers send across a shell; a dull report and then a wobbling vibration, before it steadies down upon its course. More seldom Fritzie makes reply—the perfunctory business of the night—a shrill messenger ending in a roar of explosion.

The night is very still. It seems incredible that all this unpreventable hum and bustle can have failed to reach an alert enemy. The watch hand is creeping round—half past three—four—ten past four—an interminable laggard. It is to be the greatest barrage of the war. What will this stunning experience be like? One can only imagine.

. . . . . .

"Zero" is set for four twenty, and the pointer has barely reached that figure when behind us there goes up a mighty flare, and simultaneously all along the line, ten miles to north and to south of us, other flares light up the countryside. At the same instant there breaks out the boom of our heavy guns, the sharp staccato of sixty-pounders, the dull roar of howitzers, and the ear splitting clamor of whizz-bangs—a bedlam of noise. Shells whistle and whine overhead; they cannot be distinguished one from another, but merge into a rushing cataract of sound.

In front, right athwart the horizon so far as the eye can reach spreads out a hell of flame and fire and bursting charge, reverberating back to us in mighty unison that the battle has begun. Bright from out this fiery furnace break out quick

flashes, shooting into the air and there dividing into twin red balls—the S. O. S. call of the German trenches for artillery support. But answer there is none; our counter-battery work is too perfect; their batteries are neutralized; not an enemy shell comes across; in that murky inferno all is confusion and terror.

For a minute the din is stunning, but the ear quickly becomes accustomed. The heavens are lighted up across their broad expanse by a continuous sheet of lightning, playing relentlessly over the doomed lines. Now the faint light of dawn shimmers in the east and soon blots out the fire-works. A lark rises high, carolling. Our own men can be plainly made out walking leisurely—or so it seems—forward, tanks lumbering ahead. Already some of our field batteries gallop past hard after the infantry. It is a perfect plan working out without a hitch. The heavy batteries behind raise the barrage step by step ahead of the men. All is co-ordinated to victory. Then down comes the fog, blotting out the spectacle, but saving many casualties.

The attack is such a complete and overwhelming surprise that the enemy's initial defense is feeble. Many of his batteries fall into our hands wearing their tarpaulin hoods, their crews deep in their dug-outs. Our own artillery comes off almost scatheless, except among the galloping whizz-bangs, one too venturous being put out of action by a direct hit at point-blank range. By nine o'clock these field-guns are three miles inside the enemy front line.

Six hours was set for the lifting of the barrage, but long before that its work is done and the enemy in headlong flight. After them go the whippet tanks—little uneasy beasts of steel and petrol that can do their twelve miles an hour across country when the going is good, and here, over these great rolling uplands and gentle valleys, it is perfect.

The fog lifts. It is eight o'clock. The cavalry, a wonderful sight, appear on the scene. They have come up from Hangest-sur-Somme and have lain over night in the great park

of Amiens. Like a jack-in-the-box they have sprung from nowhere—miles on miles of gay and serried ranks, led by the Canadian Cavalry Brigade; Lancers too, and many famous British regiments. This is the day so long awaited; surely this is their chance to pass through the broken enemy line, to harry and raid his back area. As is the cavalry way, they do reckless and incredible things, and heavy is the price they are to pay. They pass south of Villers-Bretonneux—Villers-Bretonneux of bright memory in darkest days of the March retreat, now in the hands of the stout Australians, neighbors on our left.

. . . . . .

Already prisoners are coming back, in little knots, in squads, in whole detachments, sometimes under guard, oftener left to their own device, mounting soon into the thousands—slouching figures in field-gray, among them grizzled veterans and mere striplings, but for the most part in the prime of life and of good physique. With them a number of officers, some swearing bitterly, others, jaunty and spruce, still rubbing the sleep out of their eyes, in good spirits. "You Canadians have no business down here," says one in excellent English. "We were told you were in Flanders; how I would like to hang our fools of Intelligence officers!"

Intermingled with them come our walking wounded. "A good blighty!" cried a grinning lad, wounded in the wrist. "How is it going? Fine. You can't see his heels for the dust!" He is in kilts, a Highlander from the Pacific Coast, one of the 3rd. Brigade. He tells us how a piper, atop of the tank "Dominion," led into action his battalion, the 16th. Canadian Scottish.

The battle has streamed away to the east and the battlefield of a few hours ago is as peaceful as an Ontario landscape after storm, whose bolts and flashes still play over the distant horizon. The most striking thing about the battleground is the extraordinary good target our gunners made. This was particularly so along the enemy front line and support. In our north-

ern area—immediately west of Marcelcave—this ran over a wide sweep of prairie, pock-marked throughout with shell holes in regular sequence, like one of those round boards on which children play at marbles.

Nothing could have lived there. Nothing did live, as is attested by hundreds of Boche dead among the ungarnered wheat; it had afforded good cover to snipers—and now to corpses. Here since March the tide of battle ebbed and flowed and the crop will not pay the reaping. Some of our men engaged in "mopping-up" are laden with great store of Boche gear. Hereabouts too we captured many heavy guns.

Dead horses testify to the heavy shelling which caught our cavalry as they pushed forward. They offered a clear target to distant gunners. Where a line of infantry, patiently working its way along, is almost indistinguishable from the dun color of the landscape, horsemen stand out boldly against the sky-line.

This plateau, unlike the heavy wooded area on our centre and right, which fell only after a bitter struggle, offers no natural impediment. And the enemy, over-confident of his power in the open field and with the fixed idea of breaking away from trench warfare, had been to but small pains to dig himself in. His trenches were rudimentary and the barrage wiped out much of their outline. There was surprisingly little wire. More might have been done, because a vast amount of it was captured—it lay in rolls everywhere. But the Boche was lazy and arrogant; the wondrous superman caught napping.

It was over these trenches our air men performed so gallantly. They were to aid the attack by bombing the front and support lines, but the mist came down in such dense folds that they must either abandon their job or take perilous risks. So they flew as low as fifty to a hundred feet, sweeping the trenches with their machine-guns. Their losses were heavy. Extraordinary to relate, an enemy trench-mortar secured a direct hit on one of them, cutting it in two. Their crumpled

frames lie here and there upon the plateau. Plodding across the fields are little knots of stretcher-bearers and burial parties. Occasionally a shell breaks among them, but they carry on their task unheeding.

From that high level one looks over what had been the smiling land of France, dotted with bosky villages and graceful church spires. Along these roads children came singing from school, and from this plateau of Santerre was garnered much of the nation's agrarian wealth. Below that eminence in the distant days of peace the broad valleys shone in the sun like the bright pattern of a patchwork quilt—the many hues of the ripening grain; wheat, oats and barley, millet, vetch and beans, undivided by hedge or fence but melting one into the other in their erratic little squares and oblongs—undistinguished indeed save by the bright hues of nature's pallette.

Now all is desolation. The hand of the Hun lies heavy on the land. Tottering walls and empty shells are all that are left of the villages; church towers are levelled in sad heaps of stone and mortar, or, less happy, expose to heaven scarred flanks and desecrated altars. Not a living soul is to be seen save men in khaki. Upon this road stands a monument: "To the heroes of the army who on this spot made their heroic stand in the war of 1870"—mentioning them lovingly by name, 'Officier' this and 'Soldat' that; it has been torn in two by a shell.

. . . . . .

Already in a dug-out, wherein a few hours before the Boche sat secure, a forward dressing-station is established. Here first aid is given to all and sundry, our men and Boche, stretcher cases and walking wounded. Prisoners reinforce our over-taxed stretcher-bearers, working in parties under their own officers, good-natured, ingratiating. The Y.M.C.A. is here too, and serves out indiscriminately hot tea, biscuits, chocolate and cigarettes. There is a little grumbling because the Boche fare as well as our own men, but it is a free hand-out and the supply seems inexhaustible. Especially are the tired troops grateful for the cigarettes, a scarce commodity.

A young farmer from the Ottawa Valley, a walking case, tells of his experiences. He is full of the battle and with difficulty is persuaded to go back three or four days—it is all so long ago! "Our battalion, the Second, was at rest a few miles west of Arras," he says. "We knew something was in the air. Two days before we moved, all the pay-books were collected, and when we got them again a notice was pasted on the back warning us to be careful in our talk with the French people and ending up with, *'Keep Your Mouth Shut.'*

"On the evening of Aug. 4 we got our moving order and marched about three hours to a small station where we entrained in box cars, labelled, 'forty men or sixteen horses.' We had our rations and bunked on the straw. No, we hadn't the faintest notion where we were going, but the talk was back to Ypres.

"Next morning we passed through a biggish town and some one said it was Abbeville, and from there until noon the railway followed a river valley. We detrained at a little station where we had tea with our bully beef and then marched two or three hours. It was very warm, and raining. Finally we came to a village we knew not what. There we had tea and expected to spend the night, but were ordered to march again. We rested once in a field and all of us, officers included, supplemented our ration with raw turnips.

"At about ten that evening we crowded on to lorries. Once going up a long hill we stuck in the mire and got off to lighten the load. Away back on the main road behind us we could see a solid line of headlights, like a gigantic serpent—endless lorries laden with troops. Early next morning, just after dawn, we got off at a village and marched into a wood, where we bivouacked all day. It was full of troops and guns and horses. Showers kept sweeping over us and the ground was sodden, but we were dead tired and slept most of the day.

"That evening a few men were picked out from each platoon to stay behind as a reserve—about enough from the whole battalion to make up a company. For the first time we were served out fresh meat which we packed along. Then

when evening came we started a long heavy night march. The roads were choked with moving columns of men, guns and lorries. We passed down a steep hill through a village and at two o'clock in the morning came to a wood where we were to stay. Dog-tired we lay down in the damp and pulled our ground-sheets over us. Shortly after sun-up the Boche started to shell the wood. The whole wood was packed with men like sardines. We ran across the 38th. Battalion, another Ottawa unit, and sang out to them. We met many of our old chums and had a good time. We hoped for a day's rest but that forenoon were put on fatigue, packing up water and ammunition. We 'slept in' that afternoon.

"In the evening a canvas bag was handed round to each man and we were given two days iron rations, with Mills and smoke bombs. I was getting pretty well loaded down, for being one of the machine-gun unit I was carrying twenty pounds of ammunition—there were seven of us: the N. C. O.; No. 1, carrying the Lewis gun; No. 2, carrying the spare parts; and the rest of us the ammunition. Each platoon was given a map and our officer and sergeant explained the lie of the land and our objective, and we were told to take particular note of the Luce river, which we were to cross. This was the first hint we had as to where we were; some of us had an idea that we were due east of Amiens, but we were further south. Batteries were coming up and taking their positions.

"At half past ten we were off again and marched up towards the line, getting to our positions at one in the morning of Aug. 8. We understood the British were holding the sector, and were surprised when we heard it was the Australians. Rising ground lay between us and the front line a mile away. We were tired out and opened cans of bully beef and beans and had a little breakfast. Then we lay down but it was bitter cold. No body of men could have been fitter physically; we were in fine trim and excellent spirits, and had confidence the Canadians would go through anything they were up against. But we knew we were in for a hard job and a lot of us wouldn't be there next night. We weren't exactly keen on going in,

but meant to do the job right. Our officer was out in front reconnoitering while we were asleep. He was a fine chap and we felt he knew what he was about and we could follow him with confidence. At about a quarter to four the corporal came around with a shot of rum, which was welcome, for we were cold all through.

"At four twenty a 6-inch naval gun set the ball rolling, followed by 12-inch howitzers and the terrible racket of a whizz-bang battery right in the valley behind us. We waited twenty-five minutes, our Third Brigade jumping-off first—they were the Canadian Highlander battalions. The tanks were a great sight. All night long we had heard them puffing and groaning as they took up their position and wondered why the Boche didn't too. But our bombing planes flew overhead drowning their noise.

"We couldn't see anything of the battle because of the slope in front of us, but soon we were off, and as we reached the front line we passed the time of day with the Australian boys. The mist came down but lifted again an hour or two later and by that time we were working along through wheat fields. Over on our flank we saw some Boche machine-gunners beating it back, fighting as they went, and we started to work round them. Our own gun was now in action. Suddenly I spotted a Boche machine-gun 75 yards dead ahead of us. We threw ourselves down and tried to outflank him, but he got me here and killed our No. 1. Our N. C. O. took the gun and another man my harness and ammunition. Our section commander was hit and had to go out, but he took out with him a Boche machine-gun officer, who had surrendered. He was hit in the leg and was leaning on his arm. I beat it out too and ran across this dressing-station. There won't be room in the lorries so after my arm is dressed I shall hike back to a Casualty Clearing Station."

He didn't say much about himself, this lad, but he had been through some of the hottest fighting of the war. "Our barrage," he said, "didn't seem anything like so bad as what the Boche put down on us in March 1917."

CHAPTER V

OPERATIONS: AUG. 8

THE impressions of an onlooker recorded above are of a rather confused scene, the rough and tumble of battle, where but a fraction of the canvas comes under the eye and no just estimation can be formed of the picture as a whole. In reality it has been all worked out beforehand in minutest detail and every piece falls into its place almost automatically. The plan and course of the first day's operations can be best followed in the words of the Corps Commander:—

"The front of attack was to extend from Moreuil to Ville-sur-Ancre on a front of approximately 20,000 yards. The dispositions of the troops participating in the battle were as follows:—

"(*a*) On the right from Moreuil to Thennes (inclusive) —The First French Army under orders of Commander-in-Chief, British Army.

"(*b*) In the centre from Thennes (exclusive) to the Amiens-Chaulnes Railway—The Canadian Corps.

"(*c*) On the left from the Amiens-Chaulnes Railway to the Somme—The Australian Corps.

"(*d*) The left flank of the Australian Corps was covered by the III (British) Corps attacking in the direction of Morlancourt.

"The object of the attack was to push forward in the direction of the line Roye-Chaulnes with the least possible delay, thrusting the enemy back in the general direction of Ham, and so facilitating the operations of the French on the front between Montdidier and Noyon."

The French on our left were not to attack until our movement had been well advanced. The battle front of the Canadian Corps exceeded 8,500 yards in a straight line, from a point

about half a mile southwest of Hourges to the Amiens-Chaulnes Railway, crossing the Luce river about half a mile north of Hourges and then trending in a northerly direction west of Hangard, through the western edge of Hangard Wood, to east of Cachy, whence it swung off to the northeast, joining the Australian line on the railway just east of Villers-Bretonneux.

For the purpose of the operation the following units were placed under the Canadian Corps Commander:—3rd.Cavalry Division (including the Canadian Cavalry Brigade); 4th. Tank Brigade; and 5th. Squadron, Royal Air Force. A mobile force was organized consisting of the 1st. and 2nd. Canadian Motor Machine-Gun Brigades, the Canadian Corps Cyclist Battalion, and a section of 6-inch Newton Mortars mounted on motor lorries. This force was named the Canadian Independent Force, placed under command of Brig.-General R. Brutinel, and given the task of co-operating with the cavalry in the neighborhood of the Amiens-Roye road, covering the right flank of our right division and maintaining liason with the French.

"I was notified," continues Sir Arthur Currie, "that two British Divisions were held in Army Reserve, and could be made available in the event of certain situations developing. The total Artillery at my disposal amounted to 17 Brigades of Field Artillery and nine Brigades of Heavy Artillery, plus four additional batteries of long-range guns."

The Canadian Corps was disposed as follows:—On the right the 3rd. Canadian Division, Major-General L. J. Lipsett, in liason with the French; in the centre, the 1st. Canadian Division, Major-General A. C. Macdonell; on the left, the 2nd. Canadian Division, Major-General Sir Henry E. Burstall, in liason with the Australians; in reserve, behind the 3rd. Canadian Division, the 4th. Canadian Division, Major-General Sir David Watson.

The Australian Corps, Lieut.-General Sir J. Monash, had two divisions in line, the 2nd. Division on the right in liason

with our 2nd. Division, and the 3rd. Australian Division on the left, resting on the south bank of the Somme, with the 5th. and 4th. Australian Divisions in support. North of the Somme the III (British) Corps had the 58th. and 18th. Divisions in line and the 12th. Division in support. It may be explained here that in recording all dispositions, objectives and the line held, it is the practice to name Units as from the right flank, on the south in the present case, to the left, or north.

The objectives of the Canadian Corps for the first day were:—

(1) The Green Line, just east of the line Hamon Wood-Courcelles - Marcelcave - Lamotte en Santerre (north of the Amiens-Roye railway).

(2) The Red Line, just east of Mezieres-Maison Blanche-Camp Vermont Farm—and the high ground east of Guillaucourt, on the Amiens-Chaulnes railway.

(3) The Blue Line, comprising the outer defenses of Amiens, which ran east of the line Hangest-Quesnel-Caix-Harbonnieres.

The latter was not intended as the final objective for the day, and the Cavalry was to exploit beyond it if possible. The average depth of penetration necessary to capture the Blue line was 14,000 yards.

The ground was very difficult, most of our forward area consisting of bare slopes exposed to enemy observation from the high ground south of the Luce River and east of Hourges. On our right the Luce river and its marshes, from two to three hundred yards in width, provided an obstacle impassable to troops. Here the only practicable access to the jumping-off line was by the bridge and road from Domart to Hourges, a narrow defile about 200 yards long commanded throughout by the high ground immediately to the east and especially from Dodo and Moreuil woods. These conditions rendered the assembly of troops prior to the attack very difficult. Some distance west of our front line, woods, villages and sunken

roads gave a certain amount of cover in the preparatory stage, and in Gentelles Wood space was found for tanks as well as troops.

"Opposite our front," says Sir Arthur Currie, "the ground consisted of a rolling plateau cut diagonally by the deep valley of the River Luce. This river flows almost due west through a strip of wooded marsh land some 300 yards wide, from which the sides of the valley rise steeply. Numerous ravines, generally running north and south, cut deep into the plateau, the ground between these ravines forming, as it were, tactical features difficult of access and more or less inter-supporting. Woods and copses are scattered over the area and many compact and well-built villages surrounded by gardens and orchards formed conspicuous landmarks. The remainder was open, unfenced farm land, partly covered with fields of standing grain. The hostile defenses consisted chiefly of unconnected elements of trenches, and a vast number of machine-gun posts scattered here and there, forming a fairly loose but very deep pattern."

Our Intelligence had reported that the enemy had 24 battalions (less than three Divisions) in the forward area and about six battalions in support, the latter belonging to Divisions on the French front, but known to be situated within the area we were to attack. It was believed that the enemy had four Divisions in reserve immediately available, and that two of these were west of the Hindenburg Line.

The Canadian Corps Commander outlines the battle plan as follows:—"The general scheme of attack was to overrun rapidly the enemy's forward area to a depth of about 3,600 yards under cover of a dense artillery barrage which would begin at "zero" hour; then without halting to seize the Red Line, relying on the help of tanks to overcome the machine-gun defenses. At that moment the cavalry was to pass through the infantry and seize the area so far as the Blue Line, supported on its right flank by the Canadian Independent Force. The cavalry was to be followed as quickly as possible by the 4th.

Canadian Division, passing through the 3rd. Canadian Division on the right, and by reserve Brigades of the 1st. and 2nd. Canadian Divisions in the centre and on the left. Every effort was to be made to exploit success wherever it occurred. Special arrangements had been made to support the attack beyond the Green Line as long as possible with heavy artillery, and sections of field artillery were detailed to advance in close support of the attacking infantry.

"The attack had been synchronized with the Australians, who were to jump off at the same hour as the Canadian Corps. The First French Army was to submit the Bois de Moreuil to a 45-minute bombardment before developing infantry action, but the General Officer Commanding had agreed that the bombardment should only begin at "zero" hour.

"The Canadian Corps being, as it were, the spearhead of the attack, the movements of other formations were to be synchronized with ours."

It will be seen from the above that a great deal depended upon the artillery, and before detailing the work of the infantry, it will be well to give some little account of this triumph of scientific gunnery. Between six and seven hundred guns were massed on the Canadian Corps front, and the barrage laid down was the greatest of the war to date, far exceeding that at Vimy Ridge.

In the first place, the difficulties attending the accumulation of all kinds of ammunition for the operation in such a short space of time were very great. The nearest Army dump from which our gunners could draw ammunition was so far away that lorries could not make more than one trip a day. Advance refilling points had not been selected, and the dumping of ammunition at these points did not really begin until Aug. 3. There was a great shortage of lorries, a considerable number of the heavy Artillery Brigades (Imperial) arriving only two or three days before the attack. When the lorries of these brigades became available there was not sufficient petrol to keep them in operation. It may be said in parenthesis that

there was a shortage of petrol throughout this operation, the Canadian Independent Force in particular being put out of action for a considerable time from this cause.

Add to this the fact that all traffic had to go over two roads —the Amiens-Roye road and the Amiens-Villers Bretonneux road, the latter being also used for Australian supply—and the general congestion can be realized. Nevertheless, though only after incredible exertions, many lorries running continuously for forty-eight and even sixty hours, a great quantity of ammunition was gathered together, six hundred rounds per gun being available. Great credit is due the administrative branches of the Canadian Corps of whom the D.A. and Q.M.G., Brig.-General G. J. Farmar, was an Imperial officer of outstanding talent and energy.

The barrage would have been wonderful if the ground had been known and prepared and every feature of the artillery problem carefully studied out in advance. It was nothing less than marvellous when the facts are taken into account that many of the batteries were only brought up a few hours before the engagement opened, that it was impossible for them to expose their presence by any attempt at registration, and that the barrage had to be plotted out entirely from maps and by triangulation. The guns were in dormant batteries, unregistered and without permanent emplacements when "zero" hour struck.

It was a triumph for Canadian gunnery. Five days only were available for preparation, and great credit is due the G.O.C., Major-General E. W. B. Morrison, his Staff and Divisional Brigade and Battery Commanders, with their rank and file. The Canadian Divisional Artillery Commanders were as follows:—1st., Brig.-General H. C. Thacker; 2nd., Brig.-General H. A. Panet; 3rd., Brig.-General J. S. Stewart; 4th., Brig.-General W. B. M. King; and 5th., Brig.-General W. O. H. Dodds. Great credit is also due the Imperial and Canadian Heavy Artillery, Brig.-General R. H. Massie, whose counter-battery work was so magnificent that the enemy artillery was smothered, and we overran many batteries that

never got into action and whose crews were deep in dug-outs. Much of the credit for this was due the Corps Counter-Battery Officer, Lt.-Col. A. G. L. McNaughton, and his staff.

Sir Arthur Currie describes the first day's operations in the following terms:—"At 4.20 a.m., Aug. 8, the initial assault was delivered on the entire Army front of attack, and the First French Army opened their bombardment. The attack made satisfactory progress from the outset on the whole front.

"East of Hourges, opposite the 3rd. Canadian Division, the high ground which dominated our front and a portion of the French front had been seized quickly by the 9th. Canadian Infantry Brigade (Brig.-General D. M. Ormond), and the way was opened for the Canadian Independent Force and the 4th. Canadian Division.

"The very complete arrangements made by the 3rd. Canadian Division to keep the bridge open, and to repair the road completely, allowed the reserves to go forward without delay. The heavy task of the Canadian Engineers was remarkably well carried out.

"By the afternoon the Canadian Corps had gained all its objectives, with the exception of a few hundred yards on the right in the vicinity of Le Quesnel, where stiff resistance was offered by unexpected reserves, but this was made good the following morning. The day's operations, in which the four Canadian Divisions took part, represented a maximum penetration of the enemy's defenses of over eight miles and included the capture of the following villages: Hangard, Demuin, Beaucourt, Aubecourt, Courcelle, Ignaucourt, Cayeux, Caix, Marcelcave, Wiencourt, l'Equipee and Guillaucourt. In addition to these, the Independent Force assisted the French in the capture of Mezieres, which was holding up their advance.

"The surprise had been complete and overwhelming. The prisoners stated that they had no idea that an attack was impending, and captured documents did not indicate that any of our preparations had been detected. An officer stated that the Canadians were believed to be on the Kemmel front."

It will be interesting to reproduce here the following extract from Sir Douglas Haig's "Victory Dispatch":—"At 4.20 a.m. on Aug. 8 our massed artillery opened intense fire on the whole front of attack, completely crushing the enemy's batteries, some of which never succeeded in coming into action. Simultaneously British infantry and tanks advanced to the assault. The enemy was taken completely by surprise, and under cover of a heavy ground mist our first objectives on the line Demuin-Marcelcave-Cerisy, south of Morlancourt, were gained rapidly.

"After a halt of two hours on this line by the leading troops, infantry, cavalry and light tanks passed through and continued the advance, the different arms working in co-operation in a most admirable manner. At the close of the day's operation our troops had completed an advance of between six and seven miles. The Amiens outer defense line, including the villages of Caix, Harbonnieres and Morcourt, had been gained on the whole front of attack, except at Le Quesnel itself. Cavalry and armored cars were in action well to the east of this line and before dawn on Aug. 9 Le Quesnel also had been taken. North of the Somme the enemy was more alert, as the result of the recent engagements in this sector, and succeeded by heavy fighting in maintaining himself for the time being in the village of Chipilly.

"East of the line of our advance the enemy at nightfall was blowing up dumps in all directions, while his transport and limbers were streaming eastwards towards the Somme, offering excellent targets to our airmen, who made full use of their opportunities. Over 13,000 prisoners, between 300 and 400 guns, and vast quantities of ammunition and stores of all kinds remained in our possession.

"The brilliant and predominating part taken by the Canadian and Australian Corps in this battle is worthy of the highest commendation. The skill and determination of these troops proved irresistible and at all points met with rapid and complete success."

CHAPTER VI

OPERATIONS: AUG. 8.—CONTINUED

IN years to come the Canadian historian will be amply repaid for a patient and minute exploration of the Canadian battalion narratives. Written on the field, expressed in the terse and concise language of the soldier, these when collected together must form an invaluable body of information, and from that storehouse of tactical movements and isolated acts of gallantry a complete and detailed picture of every battle in which Canadian troops have taken part can be correctly portrayed. But, even were the material immediately available, such a work must fill many volumes. And yet all the life and color, the spirit and the essence of battle is contained superlatively in these annals of the battalion, of the company, and of the platoon—the true infantry fighting unit; and therefore it is proposed within the circumscribed limits of the present volume to incorporate so far as may be practicable occasional accounts of the performances of individual units, as being typical of them all.

As has been seen above, the 3rd. Canadian Division had a particularly hard task on our right flank, where the ground was not only extraordinarily difficult, but the plan of the battle imposed that the French attack on our right should be 'en echelon' to our success—if the term may be used—rather than parallel to our advance.

At the kick-off the 9th. Brigade, Brig.-General D. M. Ormond, was on our extreme right, along the Roye road, with the 8th. Brigade on the left of the Divisional area (in contact with the 3rd. Brigade of the 1st. Canadian Division), the 7th. Brigade being in support. The 9th. Brigade had very hard fighting from the start, having to make good along the narrow causeway from Domart. After crossing the Luce the ground

rose up steeply to the edge of the plateau, here intersected by many gullies, swept by heavy machine-gun fire from Dodo wood on the opposing slope.

Owing to the fog many of the tanks lost direction, and the infantry were left to their own resources. Both the 43rd. Battalion, Cameron Highlanders of Winnipeg, and the 116th., Central Ontario, had stiff fighting through the woods, being for a time held up by machine-gun posts. When the mist lifted, however, the tanks put in very effectual work, reducing these strongholds, while our intensive barrage prevented the enemy sending up reinforcements. The Brigade captured many prisoners and guns of all calibres. This advance was pushed on down the Roye road through Hamon Wood, where heavy opposition was again encountered, but the troops engaged were not to be denied and secured their objectives on the Red Line on schedule.

On the Brigade left the 58th. Battalion, Western Ontario, had very heavy fighting, being confronted by many machine-gun nests. In reducing these gallant deeds were accomplished. Thus Cpl. Harry Garnet Bedford Miner, of Ridgetown, Ont., rushed an enemy machine-gun single-handed, killing the entire crew and turning the gun on the enemy. Later, with two others, he attacked another enemy machine-gun post and succeeded in putting the gun out of action. Although wounded, Cpl. Miner refused to withdraw, and rushed single-handed an enemy bombing post, bayonetting two of the garrison and putting the remainder to flight. He was mortally wounded in the performance of this deed.

On the left of the 9th. Brigade the objectives of the 8th. Brigade lay through the village of Hangard across the Luce river at Demuin. This brigade, Brig.-General D. C. Draper, had been formed in Dec., 1915, from the 1st. and 2nd. Canadian Mounted Rifle Brigades, when the exigencies of trench warfare demanded the service of every available infantryman, and, unlike the Canadian Cavalry Brigade, continued as infantry throughout the war. It consisted of the 1st., 2nd.,

4th., and 5th. C. M. R. Battalions, and with it will always be associated the terrific fighting of Sanctuary Wood in June, 1916.

On the morning of Aug. 8 the 1st. C. M. R., recruited from the Canadian prairie west, led off the attack, capturing their objective of Hangard village. The artillery barrage moved at the rate of 100 yards every three minutes, thus allowing the infantry to deal with any enemy encountered. Stubborn resistance was offered in places, but for the most part enemy machine-guns and trench-mortars had been done in by our artillery fire. Owing to the heavy mist the tanks assigned in support failed to reach the assembly positions in time to jump off with the infantry, but the barrage had destroyed the wire and the assault was pushed home with relatively slight loss. Indeed, the battalion suffered only 63 casualties though they captured 375 prisoners besides inflicting heavy casualties.

Hangard village being gained, the 2nd. C. M. R., a British Columbia unit, leap-frogged over and proceeded to attack Demuin which lay just south of the Luce river in a very strong position, flanked by a high range of hill to the east and south. Canadian Engineers under heavy fire built a footbridge over the river and the village was carried after hard fighting. Here the attack was taken up by the 7th. Brigade, Brig.-General H. M. Dyer, that had come up in support, and so fast was the assault pushed ahead that each of the two battalions in the line, the 42nd., Royal Highlanders of Canada from Montreal, and the 49th., from Edmonton, captured an entire enemy battery. Tanks now took part in the advance over the open rolling land eastward and all objectives were gained on time.

The 4th. Canadian Division followed the 3rd. Canadian Division down the Roye road, crossing the Luce at Domart, and attacked through the 3rd. Division, after the latter had gained its objective of the Mezieres-Cayeux Road. The advance was continued with the 11th. Brigade, Brig.-General V. W. Odlum, on the right, the 12th. Brigade, Brig.-General J. H. McBrien, on the left, and the 10th. Brigade, Brig.-Gen-

eral R. J. F. Hayter, in reserve in the centre. Before the infantry jumped-off at 12.10 p.m., the cavalry and some tanks had gone through, towards the old Amiens defense system. The guns had shot themselves out over the 3rd. Canadian Division's advance, and therefore the only artillery support for the troops was that of a few batteries which had followed them along, coming into action when the advance was held up.

The first real opposition came from Beaucourt village, but this was overcome, and our men pushed forward to Beaucourt wood, held by the enemy in force, his very heavy machine-gun fire holding up both our advancing Brigades. Here a very gallant infantry attack finally cleared up the situation and the line went forward once more. Considerable opposition was met and overcome by the 12th. Brigade before they finally reached the Blue Line. On the right the enemy was making a stout stand at Le Quesnel, and the fact that here the French were not abreast of us made the situation more difficult, and that evening this village remained in the hands of the enemy.

The 1st Canadian Division, the "Old Red Patch," occupied the centre of the Corps line of attack, and in describing its operations free use will be made of the very interesting narrative of the operations of the Division in the battles of 1918, prepared and published by its Staff, though considerable condensation is necessary to keep within available space limits.

The valley of the Luce, after bisecting the 3rd. Division front, ran in a generally easterly direction for 2,500 yards, made a sharp bend to the northeast for 1,000 yards, and then east again to its source, approximately 14,000 yards from the front line of the 1st. Division, or practically the final objective of the first day. For a thousand yards in breadth, in front of our line, lay Hangard Wood, strongly fortified by the enemy. To reach the first objective, the Green Line, 6,000 yards distant, the troops must attack down a slope, through Hangard Wood and the enemy front and support trenches, across a wooded valley known as Morgemont Wood, then capturing the high ground on which was situated the German main line

of resistance, then through a sharp valley known as Pantaloon Ravine in which were many machine-gun positions, and finally on to the forward slope of the north bank of the Luce. On the extreme right of the divisional area, a thousand yards short of the Green Line, northeast of Demuin, was the little village of Aubercourt.

Between the Green and the Red Lines on this sector was the valley of the Luce, heavily wooded, and throwing off deep ravines, with the village of Ignaucourt on the river 1,000 yards beyond the Green Line and 2,000 yards short of the Red Line. The Blue Line throughout our front followed the old Amiens Defense Line, a single trench line, disused and shallow for the most part. On the 1st. Division front, between the Red and Blue Lines, the frontage narrowed to 1,200 yards and offered a depth of 5,000 yards. For the first 3,000 yards was the river, then the considerable town of Caix, and 1,000 yards east the old Amiens Defense Line, the final objective.

The 1st. Canadian Division attacked on a one Brigade front, the tasks allotted being the capture of the Green Line by the 3rd. Brigade, Brig.-General G. S. Tuxford, the Red Line by the 1st. Brigade, Brig.-General W. H. Griesbach, and the blue line by the 2nd. Brigade, Brig.-General F. O. W. Loomis. Thus the attack was to take the form of three separate, distinct blows.

The 3rd. Brigade attacked with the 16th., 13th. and 14th. Battalions in line and the 15th. and 5th. Battalions in support —the latter being detached from the 2nd. Brigade, detailed to take the final objective, if absolutely necessary. Twenty-two tanks supported the Brigade in its attack. Three batteries from the Machine-Gun Battalion advanced with the infantry, and at 5.20 a.m. the 2nd. Brigade of Canadian Field Artillery followed in support. Little serious fighting took place until the main resistance line was reached. Here in his trenches the enemy put up a stiff fight, casualties being heavy on both sides, but the Highlanders were not to be denied, and the Green Line was reached well on time.

The character of this fighting is illustrated by the heroic deed of Pte. John Bernard Croak of the 13th. Battalion, a native of Glace Bay, Cape Breton. Having become separated from his section he encountered a machine-gun nest, which he bombed and silenced, taking the gun and crew prisoners. Shortly afterwards he was severely wounded but refused to desist. Having rejoined his platoon, a very strong point was encountered, containing several machine-guns. Pte. Croak, however, seeing an opportunity dashed forward alone and was almost immediately followed by the remainder of the platoon in a brilliant charge. He was the first to arrive at the trench line, into which he led his men, capturing three machine-guns and bayonetting or capturing the entire garrison. He was again severely wounded, this time mortally.

When his company was held up by heavy fire from three machine-guns, which were seriously delaying the advance, Cpl. James Herman Good of the same battalion, a native of Bathurst, N.B., realising the gravity of the situation, dashed forward alone, killing several of the garrison and capturing the remainder. Later on, Cpl. Good, while alone, encountered a battery of 5.9-inch guns, which were in action at the time. Collecting three men of his section he charged the battery under point-blank fire and captured the entire crews of three guns.

The 13th. Battalion, Montreal Highlanders, was recruited in part from the Maritime Provinces. Equally stiff fighting was encountered by the 16th. Battalion, Canadian Scottish of Western Canada, and the 14th. Battalion, Royal Montreal Regiment. The battalions supporting this successful attack of the 3rd. Brigade, the 15th., recruited from the 48th. Highlanders of Toronto, and the 5th., Saskatchewan, had sharp work mopping up, the wood being full of enemy dug-outs.

The 1st. Brigade began to move forward at 5.10 a.m., and at 8.20 crossed the Green Line and carried the attack forward. This brigade also attacked with three battalions in line, the 2nd., from Ottawa, the 3rd., recruited from Toronto district,

and 4th., Central Ontario, with the 1st., Western Ontario, in support. Its attack was carried out without artillery support, except for the bombardment of distant points by heavy guns. Six tanks were allotted to it, but 18 actually went in, as 12 of the 22 that attacked with the 3rd Brigade were still in action. The objective, the high ground east of Cayeux and the crossings of the Luce at this village and at Ignaucourt, was secured between 11 and 11.30 a.m.

In the meantime the 2nd. Brigade had been marching forward, and attacked with the 7th. Battalion, British Columbia, and 10th. Battalion, of Alberta, on the right and left of the Luce river, with the 8th. Battalion, recruited from the Province of Manitoba, in support, and the 5th. Battalion, recruited from the Province of Saskatchewan, in reserve. Fourteen tanks advanced with the infantry, of which six reached the final objective. Except on the extreme left, little resistance was encoutered by this Brigade, the enemy being demoralized.

The 2nd. Canadian Division, on the left of the Canadian line and in liason with the Australians, launched its attack from a narrow front, but widened out from Marcelcave to the north of the Amiens-Chaulnes railway toward Lamotte-en-Santerre, in order to obtain freedom of manœuvre for its attack on the towns of Wiencourt and Guillaucourt on this railway. It had here to follow high open ground over a plateau cut by deep valleys and resistance was very determined. The 2nd. Canadian Division was on a single Brigade front, the 4th. Brigade in the line, the 5th. Brigade behind, ready to pass through, and the 6th. Brigade in reserve. The 4th. Brigade, Brig.-General R. Rennie, was to capture Marcelcave and establish a line 500 yards east. With it were two companies of the 14th. Battalion Tank Corps, one Army Brigade of Artillery, and two batteries of machine-guns. There were also Canadian Engineers for investigating and repairing dug-outs.

The troops moved forward in a mist, and instead of following the tanks, they found it necessary to lead the way. On

the right was the 18th. Battalion, Western Ontario, with the 19th. Battalion, Central Ontario, on the left, in close touch with the Australians. At 6.23 a.m. the barrage lifted from Marcelcave and the troops rushed the village. Its capture was completed by 7.20 by the 19th. and 21st. Battalions, the latter being from Eastern Ontario. While leading his Battalion into action, Lt.-Col. Elmer W. Jones was killed by machine-gun fire, the command of the 21st. Battalion devolving upon Maj. H. E. Pense.

Meantime the 18th. Battalion had done good work towards Morgemont wood. All battalions in the Brigade had hard fighting, the 20th Battalion, of Toronto, though in support, suffering heavy casualties while mopping-up.

The 5th Brigade, Brig.-General J. M. Ross, advanced in support of the 4th. Brigade. Owing to the very heavy fog prevailing at the kick-off, units of the latter advanced rapidly without encountering opposition, passing in this way over wooded areas where the enemy lay hid until they had gone through. As a consequence the 5th. Brigade, following up at about 6 a.m., ran into heavy and quite unexpected machine-gun and rifle fire, progress being slow and its units losing heavily in both officers and men. The tanks were on ahead and the infantry had to fight it out alone.

In this way the 26th. Battalion, New Brunswick, Lt.-Col. A. E. G. McKenzie, was badly cut up in Snipe Copse, south of Marcelcave, losses of officers being very great. A Lieutenant, a junior subaltern in his company, found himself in command of it before reaching his objective and was later recommended for the greatest bravery and skilful leadership, inspiring his men to fresh exertions. So heavy were the casualties in the Battalion, that at one time it was seriously checked. The Officer Commanding, however, gathered together the battalion staff, including cooks and batmen, and led them into the assault, thus saving the situation, and the Battalion continued on to its objective.

The 24th. Battalion, Victoria Rifles of Montreal, of the

same Brigade, was also in line, and lost heavily in the early morning. The tanks suffered heavily, as the open, level country made them fair targets once the mist had lifted. The 5th. Brigade, in face of stiffening opposition, pushed on its attack, and captured its objective of the Red Line, Wiencourt and Guillaucourt. All its units had hard fighting, Lt.-Col. Wyse of the 25th. Battalion, Nova Scotia, being wounded, while the 22nd., French Canadians, though in support, had a number of casualties.

Towards evening the 6th. Brigade, Brig.-General A. H. Bell, went through the 5th. Brigade and captured its final objective, the old Amiens defense line, with the 31st. Battalion, Southern Alberta, on the right, and the 29th. Battalion, British Columbia, on the left. In close support were the 27th. Battalion, Manitoba and 28th. Battalion, Saskatchewan. The fighting was stiff and the 28th. was drawn into it before the Blue Line was won.

Notwithstanding the very hard going, the 2nd. Canadian Division thus captured all its objectives on time. Although, owing to its prolonged period in the line, it had not had the same months of training in open warfare as our other Divisions, its troops proved themselves readily adaptable to the new conditions.

The 2nd. Australian Division, on our immediate left, made good progress, advancing beside us through Bayonneviller to east of Harbonnieres, but south of the Somme the 3rd. Australian Division was held up a good deal by the failure of the III British Corps to make any substantial progress north of that river. This Corps had been subjected to a heavy attack two days before and had only succeeded on Aug. 7 in regaining ground lost and was in no condition to push with vigor a new offensive on the grand scale.

Thus ended the first day of the battle, in which all four Canadian Divisions had been engaged, the greatest penetration, east of Caix, representing a depth of 16,000 yards from the jumping-off line and thus constituting a record first day's

advance on the West Front. Over six thousand prisoners had been captured, exceeding our total casualties, with a vast quantity of guns and material of all kinds, including two complete enemy Divisional Headquarters, with valuable plans and documents. As had been done at Vimy, where captured batteries had been renamed the 1st., 2nd., and 3rd. "Pan-Germanic" Batteries, we put to immediate use the captured guns, with their great store of ammunition, but in this case every gun on our front being captured, two complete "Pan-Germanic" Artillery Brigades were formed, a Colonel of Artillery being sent up to take command. Captured documents confirmed what this massing of artillery in the front line indicated, namely, that we had anticipated the enemy offensive against Amiens by two days only. Had it been otherwise, and the line been held lightly but in depth, our captures must have been far less and we should not have so overwhelmed the defense in our first rush. Tougher fighting was ahead.

CHAPTER VII

OPERATIONS: AUG. 9-11

WE have seen how on the opening day all the objectives had been captured except the town of Le Quesnel on our extreme right, a strong position the enemy was able to hold because the French were not up on our flank. Plans for the renewal of the attack next day depended on an early clearing up of this situation by the 4th. Canadian Division, and accordingly the 11th. Brigade was entrusted with the task. The 75th. Battalion, recruited from Central and Western Ontario, advanced by night to the assault, while the 87th. Battalion, the Grenadier Guards of Montreal, was to make a flank march across the enemy front, passing south of the Roye road, and thence falling on the enemy's flank.

These battalions had to take up their positions for the attack in the dark by the stars and their maps and compasses, a difficult operation, but, starting off at 4.30 a.m., they were on their appointed ground by six o'clock, when aided by an intensive barrage, the attack was successfully pushed home. An amusing incident was the wager made between the Brigadier and Lt.-Col. C. C. Harbottle of the 75th. as to which should first occupy the enemy divisional headquarters known to be in Le Quesnel. The battalion commander won out by a short space and the Brigade had to be content with less pretentious headquarters.

To return to the narrative of the Corps Commander:—"On the following day, Aug. 9, the advance was continued with the 3rd., 1st. and 2nd. Canadian Divisions in the line, the 4th. Canadian Division being held in Corps Reserve. Substantial progress was made, and by evening the average depth of our advance was about four miles, with a maximum of six and a half miles at some points. The following additional villages

were captured:—Le Quesnel, Folies, Bouchoir, Beaufort, Warvillers, Rouvroy, Vrely, Meharicourt and Rosieres. The Infantry and Tanks of the 3rd. Canadian Division and the Canadian Independent Force co-operated with the French in the capture of Arvillers.

"During the day the enemy's resistance stiffened considerably, and whatever gains were made resulted from heavy infantry fighting against fresh troops, with only a few tanks available for support. This advance had brought our troops within the area of the trenches and defenses occupied prior to the Somme operations of 1916. These trenches, while not in a good state of repair, were, nevertheless, protected by a considerable amount of wire, and lent themselves readily to a very stubborn machine-gun defense."

The battle had indeed assumed an entirely different character. Although an average of six thousand yards was gained during the day, it was only at cost of very heavy ding-dong fighting. With the best will in the world it took time to bring up the artillery. Canadian railway troops were engaged in pushing up the rail-head from Amiens but progress was slow. In face of fresh enemy divisions, it was necessary to proceed with utmost caution and not expose our troops to needless losses unless the gain was positive. But the spirit of the men continued wonderful. In fact Sir Arthur Currie found in his visits to advanced dressing stations many of our wounded anxious to get back into the line.

The day's attack had been designed to open early in the morning, the glimmer of dawn being the favorite hour of the Canadian Corps. But until Le Quesnel fell this plan had to be postponed, and changes were also necessary in the alignment of the divisions, our 2nd. Division extending its area further south, forcing the 1st. Division to side-slip south about 5,000 yards. All this took time and the kick-off did not therefore take place until well on in the day.

The task assigned the Corps on Aug. 9 was not so formidable to all seeming as that accomplished on the previous day.

It meant an attack on a five-mile front to a depth of about three and a half miles. The objective was the Bouchoir-Rouvroy-Meharicourt road. The country was almost flat, very open, with only a few villages and small woods scattered over it. The attack was to be carried out by the 3rd., 1st., and 2nd. Divisions from right to left. The 3rd. Division had to advance down the Roye road and capture Folies and Bouchoir. The 1st. Division had the villages of Beaufort, Warvillers and Rouvroy on its front, while the 2nd. Division was responsible for Vrely, Rosieres and Meharicourt.

On the right, as has been seen, the 3rd. Division not only secured their objectives but went out of the Corps area to assist the French in capturing Arvillers.

In the centre, on the 1st. Division front, the 1st. Brigade was sent in to capture Beaufort and Rouvroy and the 2nd. Brigade against Warvillers. The 1st. Brigade attacked with the 1st. Battalion, Western Ontario, and 4th. Battalion, Central Ontario, in the line, the 2nd. Battalion, Ottawa, in support, and the 3rd. Battalion, recruited from Toronto district, in reserve. The attack was supported by two batteries of machine-guns and the 1st. Brigade of Field Artillery covered the advance. From the outset the attacking troops came under heavy machine-gun fire, from the high ground on the right. In order to deal with it the right-flank troops of the 1st. Division were deflected south, the 2nd. Battalion being pushed forward to fill the gap, thereafter fighting right through to the objective.

The 2nd. Brigade was able to make rapid progress in the early stage of the attack, outstripping the troops on its right by the time Warvillers was reached. This village and the woods immediately to the south of it were captured by the aid of tanks with but little difficulty. But on the extreme right in the early stage of the attack, serious resistance was encountered, coming from a nest of machine-guns in Hatchett Wood. The 2nd. Brigade attacked with the 5th. Battalion, Saskatchewan, and the 8th. Battalion, of Winnipeg, and there came up in

support two battalions of the 3rd. Brigade, the 15th., recruited from the 48th. Highlanders of Toronto, and the 14th., Royal Montreal Regiment.

The intensive fighting on this front was fruitful of many individual deeds of gallantry. Thus, when his platoon came unexpectedly under fire of numerous machine-guns, Acting-Sergeant George Frederick Coppins of the 8th. Battalion, a native of London, England, finding that it was not possible to advance nor retire, and when, no cover being available, it was apparent that the platoon must be annihilated unless the machine-guns were at once silenced, called for four volunteers to follow him and leapt forward in the face of intense machine-gun fire. With his comrades he rushed straight for the machine-guns. The four men with him were killed and Cpl. Coppins wounded. Despite his wounds he reached the hostile machine-guns alone, killed the operator of the first gun and three of the crew, and made prisoners four others.

Bold initiative on the part of Sergt. D. Zengal, 5th. Battalion, of Woolford, Alta., saved the lives of many of his comrades. He was leading his platoon forward gallantly to the attack, east of Warvillers, but had not gone far when he realized that a gap had occurred on his flank, and that an enemy machine-gun was firing at close range into the advancing line. Grasping the situation, he rushed forward some 200 yards ahead of the platoon, tackled the machine-gun emplacement, killed the officer and operator of the gun, and dispersed the crew. Later, when the battalion was held up by very heavy machine-gun fire, he displayed much tactical skill and directed his fire with destructive results. Shortly afterwards he was rendered unconscious by an enemy shell, but on recovering consciousness he at once continued to direct harassing fire on the enemy.

Twelve tanks supported the 1st. Canadian Division this day, six with each Brigade, and all did valuable service. In addition the Divisional Commander secured some whippet tanks from the Cavalry Corps, and these were of assistance in clearing Beaufort wood.

Meanwhile on our left, in touch with the Australians, the 2nd. Canadian Division had exceedingly stiff fighting. At 11 a.m. the 5th. Brigade attacked on the right, and the 6th. Brigade on the left, with the 4th. Brigade in reserve. The 5th. had in line the 25th. Battalion, Nova Scotia, on the right, and the 22nd. Battalion, French Canadians, on the left, and advanced under very heavy fire on Meharicourt. Earlier in the day this town had been ridden over by the 8th. Hussars, but it was again in the hands of the enemy. The position was studded with machine-gun posts, the enemy being in great strength along the ravine from Vrely to Meharicourt, and the men fought their way forward slowly, reducing these strongholds in succession.

The two battalions worked their way forward with the greatest gallantry, and finally stormed Meharicourt at 5 p.m., clearing the village and establishing a line in front of it. They were here, however, exposed to the point-blank fire of a battery at Maucourt. The 24th. Battalion, Victoria Rifles of Montreal, and the 26th. Battalion, New Brunswick, came up in support and the line was consolidated. Brig.-General J. M. Ross was severely wounded, being incapacitated for several months, command of the 5th. Brigade devolving upon Lt.-Col. T. L. Tremblay, of the 22nd. Battalion.

On our extreme left the 6th. Brigade had before it the considerable town of Rosieres, supported by the railway embankment, and here the enemy was in great force, having established numerous machine-gun posts in the suburbs. Although the general attack of the 2nd. Canadian Division was not to take place until 11 a.m., the battalion on our left, the 27th., of Manitoba, attacked at 8 a.m., in conjunction with the Australians and not to hold up their advance. In its advance the battalion was exposed to enfilade fire from both flanks and fought its way forward with the greatest difficulty but with grim determination. It was indeed one of the hardest fights of its history, and it suffered heavy casualties before its troops entered the town at a quarter past one that afternoon. Here many prisoners and much booty was captured.

On the Brigade right, the 29th. Battalion, of Vancouver, did not kick-off until 11 a.m., synchronizing its advance with that of the 5th. Brigade on its right. It was held up too by heavy flank fire from the direction of Rosieres, and had a hard battle all the way, suffering 250 casualties. In Rosieres the battalion captured an 11-inch naval gun mounted on a railway truck. In the afternoon the 6th. Brigade proceeded to the capture of its final objective for the day.

In the high church tower of Rosieres one of our Batteries established an "O-Pip" (Observation Post), and this elevation gave a fine view of the battle both north and south. About a mile east of Rosieres could be seen lying on the track an entire enemy train, which, laden with reinforcements, had been captured by Imperial cavalry. This church tower was a conspicuous mark to the enemy batteries further east and not many hours passed before they brought it down.

On our left Australian troops had stormed Lihons, thus thrusting a sharp salient into the enemy defense, and their line thence fell back northwesterly through Rainecourt and Proyart to Morcourt on the Somme. The enemy, however, attacked in great force, and the Australians were obliged to fall back from both Lihons and Proyart, converting for the time being our position at Meharicourt into a salient.

Fighting of the same character continued next day, Aug. 10. "The attack was continued on the morning of Aug. 10," says Sir Arthur Currie, "with the 3rd. Canadian Division on the right and the 4th. Canadian Division on the left, the 1st. and 2nd. Divisions being held in Corps Reserve. After the 3rd. Canadian Division had taken the village of Le Quesnoy, the 32nd. (British) Division, which had come under the Canadian Corps on the night of Aug. 9-10, passed through it and advanced the line somewhat further from the old British trenches west of Parvillers and Damery. The 4th. Canadian Division during the day succeeded, after very hard fighting, in occupying Fouquescourt, Maucourt, Chilly and Hallu."

The capture of Fouquescourt was particularly valuable in

view of preparations in progress for an attack on the strong enemy positions between that village and the Roye road. Desperate fighting took place on the 4th. Canadian Divisional front, where our left flank still presented a pronounced salient. On the Divisional right, the 10th. Brigade fought its way forward through a maze of enemy machine-gun positions, in face of intensive artillery fire. All its battalions were heavily engaged at one stage or another, these being the 44th., New Brunswick, but originally recruited in the West; the 46th., South Saskatchewan; the 47th., Western Ontario; and 50th., Calgary.

The 12th. Brigade, Brig.-General J. H. McBrien, carried on the attack on the left of our line from the neighborhood of Meharicourt, storming Maucourt and Chilly with the railway at Hallu the objective. The going was extraordinarily difficult, through a maze of trenches and wire, studded with machine-gun posts. The 78th. Battalion of Winnipeg fought its way right through to Hallu. The 38th. Battalion, Ottawa, also saw very heavy fighting in this sector, and in fact the whole Brigade greatly distinguished itself, the other battalions being the 72nd., British Columbia, and the 85th., Nova Scotia.

The 11th. Brigade came up in support and was also heavily engaged, and here the 102nd. Battalion, British Columbia, held a critical position in face of very heavy loss. But the enemy was able to bring up more artillery and the salient was found untenable. "During the night of Aug. 10-11 a strong enemy counter-attack developed against a part of the front of the 4th. Canadian Division east of Hallu," says the Corps Commander. "This counter-attack was beaten off, but owing to general conditions the line at that point was slightly withdrawn to the railway embankment immediately to the west of Hallu. Subsequent upon this slight withdrawal, and with a view to reducing the existing salient forward to Chilly, the line was further withdrawn to the eastern outskirts of that village.

"On Aug. 11, at 9.30 a.m.," he goes on, "the 32nd. Division

launched an attack against Damery, but was not successful. The 4th. Canadian Division improved their line by advancing it locally to reduce the Chilly salient, which was still very pronounced. During the night of Aug. 11-12 the 32nd. Division and 4th. Canadian Division were relieved by the 3rd. and 2nd. Canadian Divisions respectively."

On. Aug. 13 Sir Arthur Currie addressed a special order to his Command, as follows:—

"The first stage of this Battle of Amiens is over, and one of the most successful operations conducted by the Allied Armies since the war began is now a matter of history.

"The Canadian Corps has every right to feel more than proud of the part it played. To move the Corps from the Arras front and in less than a week launch it in battle so many miles distant was in itself a splendid performance. Yet the splendor of that performance pales into insignificance when compared with what has been accomplished since "zero" hour on Aug. 8.

"On that date the Canadian Corps—to which was attached the 3rd. Cavalry Division, the 4th. Tank Brigade, the 5th. Squadron, R.A.F.—attacked on a front of 7,500 yards. After a penetration of 22,000 yards the line to-night rests on a 10,000 yard frontage. Sixteen German Divisions have been identified, of which four have been completely routed. Nearly 150 guns have been captured, while over 1,000 machine-guns have fallen into our hands. Ten thousand prisoners have passed through our cages and Casualty Clearing Stations, a number greatly in excess of our total casualties. Twenty-five towns and villages have been rescued from the clutch of the invaders, the Paris-Amiens railway has been freed from interference, and the danger of dividing the French and British Armies has been dissipated.

"Canada has always placed the most implicit confidence in her Army. How nobly has that confidence been justified, and with what pride has the story of your gallant success been read in the homeland! This magnificent victory has been won

because your training was good, your discipline was good, your leadership was good. Given these three, success must always come.

"From the depths of a very full heart I wish to thank all Staffs and Services—the Infantry, the Artillery, the Cavalry, the Engineers, the Machine-Gunners, the Independent Force (consisting of the Motor Machine-Gun Brigades and the Cyclists), the Tank Battalions, the R.A.F., the Medical Services, the Army Service Corps, the Ordnance Corps, the Veterinary Corps, and the Chaplain Services, for their splendid support and co-operation, and to congratulate you all on the wonderful success achieved. Let us remember our gallant dead, whose spirit shall ever be with us, inspiring us to nobler effort, and when the call again comes, be it soon or otherwise, I know the same measure of success will be yours."

CHAPTER VIII

OPERATIONS: AUG. 12-20

THE heroic though fruitless assault of the 32nd. British Division upon the immensely strong enemy positions in front of Parvillers and Damery is worth recording in more detail, because it opened the way for a magnificent feat of arms on part of troops of the 3rd. Canadian Division.

Two and a half miles northwest of Roye right athwart the Amiens-Roye road rises the 100-metre eminence known, from the singular shape of the wood at its foot, as the Bois-en-Z, or Zed Wood. It formed an important feature of ancient defenses in this region and to this day the galleries hewn from the living rock still exist in the base of the hill. The enemy when on the defensive prior to the battles of the Somme in 1916, was quick to seize its value and made of it the pivot of his defense in front of Roye, a considerable railway centre. Linked up with the villages to the north it formed a chief outwork of his Roye-Chaulnes line. Its importance was so generally recognized that in the early stage of the present battle a squadron of the Fort Garry Horse had made a reckless dash down the Roye road in the hope of galloping the position —a fatal ride described in detail on a subsequent page.

The enemy held in force Andechy, a village a mile southwest of the Zed Wood (which for a few hours had been in the hands of our cavalry on Aug. 10), Damery, three-quarters of a mile to the northeast of the wood, and Parvillers, the same distance due north of Damery. His right flank, though somewhat compromised by the capture of Fouquescourt recorded above, a village a mile and three-quarters north and a little east of Parvillers, still rested firmly on the wood immediately north of Parvillers with the little hamlet of Maison Bleu just beyond, and received additional support from the fortified

village of La Chavette, a mile and a quarter northeast of Parvillers and therefore the same distance southeast of Fouquescourt. Running for a thousand yards south of Damery and so northeast of Zed Wood, is Damery Wood.

For military purposes of an earlier age this old Roman road had been led right over the crest of Zed Wood, and on each side for a mile or two west the enemy had lined it with trenches and wire, with machine-gun positions sweeping what was in effect a natural glacis. The same defense system, with a double line of trench, had been carried from the Roye Road west of Damery and thence west of Parvillers.

As is usual in this part of the country, each of these villages is perched upon a slight elevation, rising from 90 metres at Damery to 95 at Parvillers, crowned with the dense foliage of the village park. Immediately east of this line the ground rises gently up, to fall away in a little dip and then rise again to the villages of Goyencourt and Fresnoy-lez-Roye, the former being about 1,200 yards and the latter 2,000 yards northeast of Damery, and these could not have been placed better to afford support to both Damery and Parvillers, either by infantry or artillery. Goyencourt is on a slightly higher level than Damery, but the ridge intervening prevents direct observation and was to form the key to the battle tactics of our troops who finally captured it.

The weakness of the position is that immediately in front of it lies a wide plateau, with a uniform elevation of 100 metres, distant about a thousand yards from both Damery and Parvillers, and, what was worse from the point of view of the defense, thrusting in a tongue between them. On this higher ground is situated the old British front line of the Somme, but it is bare and open affording no natural cover. To make a frontal attack necessitated descending from the plateau and then advancing up the reverse slope against the villages, everywhere exposed to artillery and machine-gun fire. The only shelter was an old but still deep support trench running east and west and leading directly out of our defense system into Damery village.

It was against this immensely strong position that the 32nd. Division was sent in to attack. This British Division had been brought hastily down from the north, covering part of the distance by marching, and the troops were tired out when they took over from our 3rd. Division on the night of Aug. 9-10. During Aug. 10 elements of the Division improved the line with a view to securing a better jumping-off ground. There was no sleep at night for the enemy kept up a deluge of artillery fire liberally besprinkled with gas shells.

At half past nine in the morning of Sunday, Aug. 11, the Division launched an attack extending over its whole front, supported by a not very successful barrage. The troops attacked with the utmost gallantry but were met by a withering and crushing fire, and at no point made an advance of more than a hundred yards beyond our trench system. The Units engaged included Devon troops and Highland Light Infantry, and our men who witnessed the slaughter said it was an inspiring sight to see these attempting to dig in under the hail and fury of fire.

Finally the Division fell back, having suffered nearly two thousand casualties, and the following night was relieved by the 3rd. Canadian Division. The heavy loss was due primarily to the Divisional Artillery putting down their barrage too far ahead of the troops, with the result that their men were not following the barrage sufficiently closely. No troops in the world could have shown greater fortitude or pertinacity, the attack being persisted in long after its hopelessness was revealed.

The 3rd. Canadian Division took over again therefore on Sunday night, Aug. 11-12. The Divisional Commander, Major-General L. J. Lipsett, at once set about his preparation for the attack. He decided that our left sector in front of Parvillers, offered best prospects for an initial success. Plans were carefully prepared for a massing of artillery and for this purpose the divisional artillery had the support of the 5th. Canadian Divisional Artillery, with some heavy batteries.

Monday and Tuesday were devoted to fighting the way step by step through the old trench system up to the northern and western edge of Parvillers and Damery. This was done under unremittant and intense enemy fire, both day and night, our troops continually having to put on their gas masks. Nor was this all. On Monday the enemy made two determined counter-attacks, and on Tuesday night counter-attacked three times, but on each occasion was beaten off. Finally all was ready and it was decided to open the attack on Parvillers on Wednesday night.

The assault was assigned to the 7th. Brigade, and one battalion, the 42nd., Royal Highlanders of Montreal, Lt.-Col. R. L. H. Ewing, started in by making a detour north of Parvillers, bombing as they went. So soon as this movement was well under way, the Princess Patricia's Light Infantry, Lt.-Col. C. J. T. Stewart, initiated a similar attack south of Parvillers, thrusting in along the high spur alluded to above. By dawn both battalions were established on the northern and southern outskirts of the village respectively.

At a quarter past six our massed artillery laid down a hurricane barrage for fifteen minutes. The two battalions then rushed the village, joining hands fifteen minutes later, with combined casualties of but five men since the kick-off of the previous night. But the heavy fighting was yet to come.

Leaving the 42nd. to mop up the village, the P.P.L.I. pushed on to the east, and prepared to fight off a determined counter-attack developing from La Chavette to the northeast; but they were immediately appraised of another attack coming at their rear from Damery. Nothing daunted, they formed front both ways and fought their way back into Parvillers, though the enemy was coming on four deep from two directions. The 42nd. came up to their support, and soon the other two battalions of the Brigade, the Royal Canadian Regiment and the 49th. of Edmonton, were on the ground helping to consolidate the position.

During the course of the day the enemy attacked again and

again but finally desisted, the P.P.L.I. estimating 500 dead on their front. The village was honeycombed with subterranean passages, and in mopping up these three platoons of the 42nd., about 90 men, not only killed a hundred of the enemy as they strove to fight their way out, but captured and sent to the rear 402 prisoners. These two battalions suffered heavy casualties but they were incurred after the village had been stormed. One officer remarked that there had been no harder infantry fighting since Mouquet Farm.

Many individual feats of valor characterised this fight for Parvillers, such as that of Pte. Thomas Dineson, of the 42nd. Battalion, a native of Denmark but who enlisted in Montreal. During ten hours of hand-to-hand fighting, which resulted in the capture of over a mile of strongly garrisoned and stubbornly defended enemy trenches, he displayed conspicuous and continuous bravery. Five times in succession he rushed forward alone and single-handed put hostile machine-guns out of action, accounting for twelve of the enemy with bomb and bayonet. His sustained valor and resourcefulness inspired his comrades at a very critical stage of the battle.

At a critical period of the counter-attack, when his platoon was isolated and almost surrounded, Sergt. Robert Spall, of the P.P.L.I., seized a Lewis gun and jumping upon the parapet of the trench his platoon was holding, poured in a withering fire on the oncoming enemy ranks, inflicting many casualties. He then led his men along the trench into a sap, 75 yards from the enemy, where picking up another Lewis gun, this gallant N.C.O. again climbed the parapet and by his fire at point-blank range checked the enemy advance. He was here fatally wounded, but his courage and resourcefulness had saved his platoon. Born in Suffolk, England, he was brought by his parents to Montreal when a child, and at the outbreak of the war was engaged in business in Winnipeg.

In the meantime another battle had developed almost unexpectedly at Damery, on the front of the 9th. Brigade. The 52nd. Battalion, for the most part lumbermen and prospectors

recruited at Fort William and Port Arthur, held the line immediately opposite the village. On Wednesday night the enemy made a half-hearted attack, and at nine o'clock next morning, Aug. 15, a platoon was sent up the support line, described above, bombing as they went, to test out the enemy's resistance. They reported back all clear. The Battalion Commander, Lt.-Col. W. W. Foster, made a personal reconnaisance with one runner, and, satisfied that the village could be carried, ordered an attack at five minutes' notice. One company on the right went forward south of the village, a second company followed up the support trench and a third skirted the village on the north, with the remaining company in support. Very shortly Damery was in our hands. A few of the enemy were found in dug-outs and one of these lunged his bayonet through the sleeve of Col. Foster's tunic before the latter shot him down.

Suspecting a trap, he led his battalion east of the village and formed up behind the ridge, with one company pushed well out on either flank. In the meantime the 116th. Battalion, Centre Ontario, was pushing forward on his left and the 43rd. Battalion, Winnipeg, in close support of the 52nd.

The movement was carried out barely in time for there broke on the doomed village an intense enemy cannonade of heavy and light guns. But not a shell touched our men, lying behind the ridge. Gas, laid down in the village, floated back on a west wind over their heads. Then, after the preparation was considered complete, dense waves of field-gray, converging on Damery from both Goyencourt and Fresnoy, flooded in to an easy victory. They came in full marching equipment with their blankets, evidently expecting to break through. Not less than four enemy battalions came against our little force. They came confidently on to one of the most terrible slaughters of the war, for our magnificent artillery, assisted by French batteries on our right, laid down an intense barrage in the centre of their massed advance, and right across its entire length, extending as far back as the Goyencourt-Fresnoy road.

The front waves were caught between the barrage and the village and must either fight their way through or surrender. They fought with desperate courage. Our centre fell back a little to the edge of the village, while both our flanks, somewhat advanced and wheeling in, poured a murderous rifle and machine-gun fire into the penned enemy mass. He was doomed. A few fought through to the village and fell beneath our bayonets; some 250 surrendered; the rest died. The dead, conservatively estimated at over one thousand, were piled up rampart high, for our range was never more than 200 yards.

This was at one o'clock in the afternoon. At four o'clock the enemy again made a massed attack, so vital was the position to the defense of Roye. But by this time the Cameron Highlanders of Winnipeg had come up in support with a company on either flank of the 52nd. and secured Damery Wood. The enemy was driven back with further slaughter. Among our wounded was Lieut.-Col. Urquhart, who had so gallantly brought up his Battalion, the 43rd. Assistance too had been rendered from the direction of the Roye road by the "International Company," half French and half Canadian, who formed the liason between us. Our gallant French neighbors, indeed, fired by our success, pitched in that evening and stormed Zed Wood. By a singular chance the immediate neighbors of the 52nd. Canadian Infantry Battalion were the 52nd. French Chasseurs, and an interchange of compliment and congratulation took place on the very fine work of both sides.

The remainder of the Battle ofAmiens, so far as the Canadian Corps is concerned, is thus described by the Corps Commander:—"On the nights of Aug. 15-16 and 16-17 the 1st. Canadian Division relieved the 3rd. Canadian Division, the latter being withdrawn to Corps Reserve. Progress was made during the night of Aug. 16-17, the enemy being driven out of Fransart by the 4th. Brigade, Brig.-General R. Rennie, and out of La Chavette by the 1st. Canadian Division, our line on the right being advanced in co-operation with the French.

"The relief of the 2nd. Canadian Division by the 4th. Cana-

dian Division was carried out on the nights of Aug. 15-16 and 16-17, the former being withdrawn to Corps Reserve on Aug. 17. The operation which had been projected for Aug. 16, had been postponed and it had been decided to transfer the Canadian Corps back to the First Army, the move to begin by strategical trains on Aug. 19.

"Aug. 18 was quiet along the front, but on Aug. 19 the 4th. Canadian Division carried out a minor operation near Chilly, which greatly improved our line in that neighborhood. Four hostile counter-attacks to recover the newly-won ground were beaten off during the night.

"On Aug. 19, the 2nd. and 3rd. Canadian Divisions started their move to First Army, and on the night of Aug. 19-20 the relief of the 1st. Canadian Division commenced. This relief was completed on Aug. 22, and the 1st. Canadian Division was placed in Corps Reserve. On Aug. 22 I handed over command of the Canadian Corps front to the G.O.C., Australian Corps, and my headquarters moved north to Hautecloque, opening there at 10 a.m. on the same day.

"Between Aug. 2 and 22 the Canadian Corps fought against 15 German Divisions; of these 10 were directly engaged and thoroughly defeated, prisoners being captured from almost every one of their battalions; the five other divisions fighting astride our flanks, were only partially engaged by us.

"In the same period the Canadian Corps captured 9,131 prisoners, 190 guns of all calibres, and more than 1,000 machine-guns and trench mortars. The greatest depth penetrated approximated to 14 miles, and an area of over 67 square miles containing 27 towns and villages had been liberated.

"The casualties suffered by the Canadian Corps in the 14 days' heavy fighting amounted to—

	Officers	Other Ranks
Killed	126	1,688
Missing	9	436
Wounded	444	8,659
Total	579	10,783

"Considering the number of German Divisions engaged, and the results achieved, the casualties were very light."

The capture of Fransart by the 2nd. Canadian Division was a brilliant piece of work. On Aug. 19 orders were issued to the 4th. and 5th. Brigades, to push forward and establish a line which should deny to the enemy the defenses of the railway east of Fransart, and also clear the village, thus enabling the 1st. Canadian Division, which was attacking on the right in co-operation with the French, to obtain their objective of La Chavette. The 19th. Battalion, Central Ontario, Lt.-Col. L. H. Millen, attacked at half past four in the afternoon and successfully carried out the operation, establishing a line well forward of the village, capturing many prisoners and machine-guns and much material. By half past seven the line had been consolidated.

This Battalion was assisted by two companies of the 18th. Battalion, Western Ontario, on the right, who after the attack, were used to protect and hold the extended right flank, caused by the Division on the right not having been able to advance simultaneously.

During these operations since Aug. 8 casualties among officers were very heavy. In addition to casualties among Battalion Commanders mentioned previously, Lt.-Col. C. E. Bent of the 15th. Battalion, of Toronto, was severely wounded, the command devolving until his return some weeks later on Maj. J. D. Garvan. Lt.-Col. W. S. Latta of the 29th. Battalion, of Vancouver, was also severely wounded.

CHAPTER IX

OPERATIONS: CANADIAN CAVALRY BRIGADE

REFERENCE has been made to the wonderful spectacle afforded by the British Cavalry Corps when on the morning of Aug. 8 it rode up on to the plateau of Santerre. This arm had done good service in the first Battle of Cambrai, and had proved of vital value in the great retreat of the previous March, and now it looked as if they were to have the opportunity of breaking through the enemy line. That was not to be, but they nevertheless by their dashing tactics contributed very materially to the demoralization of the enemy, particularly on Aug. 8 and 9.

In making his acknowledgements Field-Marshal Haig, himself a brilliant cavalry leader, writes as follows:—"The fine performance of the cavalry throughout all stages of the operation deserves mention. Having completed their assembly behind the battlefront by a series of night marches, on the first day of the attack they advanced 23 miles from their points of concentration and by the dash and vigor of their action, both on this and subsequent days, rendered most valuable and gallant service." And again:—"The cavalry were again able to demonstrate the great advantage their rapid power of concentration gives them in a surprise attack. Operating in close contact with both armored cars and infantry, they pushed ahead of the latter and by anticipating the arrival of the German Reserves assisted materially in our success."

The Third Cavalry Division was placed in this operation at disposition of the Canadian Corps Commander, but as the battle developed, with the opportunity for exploitation offering more and more in the Canadian sector, Corps' Boundaries were not strictly observed. Thus, on Aug. 9 the First Cavalry Division, led by the 8th Hussars, came into the Corps area on

our left flank and took Meharicourt at the gallop, while a little to the east of Rosieres Imperial Cavalry captured a whole train of enemy reinforcements, some five or six hundred Saxons, that had been rushed up the line.

The Third Cavalry Division was led into battle by the Canadian Cavalry Brigade, Brig.-General R. W. Paterson, consisting of the Royal Canadian Dragoons, Lt.-Col. Van Straubenzee (afterwards killed in action during the advance on Le Cateau), Lord Strathcona's Horse (Royal Canadians), Lt.-Col. MacDonald, and the Fort Garry Horse, Lt.-Col. Stephenson. Both the R.C.D's and the Strathcona's form part of the Canadian permanent force, the former with depot in Toronto and a distinguished fighting record going back to the North-West Rebellion of 1885 and including South Africa; while the latter is the famous force recruited and maintained by Lord Strathcona during the South African war, its depot originally being at Winnipeg but more recently removed to Calgary. While in the militia list the 34th. Fort Garry Horse of Winnipeg is only a junior organization, its war record entitles it to rank as a veteran force. One of its notable exploits was in the First Battle of Cambrai, November, 1917, when one of its squadrons was the only cavalry unit to get across the Scheldt canal, its wonderful fight there being a matter of public record.

A number of other mounted units sailed from Canada, including the various battalions of the Canadian Mounted Rifles, later formed into the 8th. Canadian Infantry Brigade, and never remounted. But the three regiments named, while all demounted and taking their part as infantry in the early defensive days of trench warfare, were reorganized as the Canadian Cavalry Brigade when the prospect of our offensives on the west front opened the way for cavalry co-operation. The brigade formed a complete unit with its own Canadian Royal Horse Artillery, machine-gun squadron and field ambulance, and the intensive training in shock tactics it had received made it admirably fitted for the work ahead of it.

The Third Cavalry Division, also including the 5th. and 6th. Brigades, was billeted in the area of Hangest-sur-Somme, when on the night of Aug. 6-7 it moved up to Amiens, reaching there at three in the morning, and lying all next day in the city park. At eight o'clock in the evening of Aug. 7 the Canadian Cavalry Brigade took the road through Longeau up to the woods west of Villers-Bretonneux, where it remained until after the battle opened. At a quarter to six on the morning of Aug. 8 the advance began, passing south of Marcelcave across the Luce River at Ignaucourt, and then taking up a battle-line west of Beaucourt and Cayeux, the R.C.D's being on the right at the former point with the Strathcona's on the left and the Fort Garry's in reserve, each regiment engaged having two squadrons in line and its third in support.

The enemy occupied Beaucourt in force, holding up the advance of our infantry along the Roye road. At noon the R.C.D's were lying in shelter behind the ridge about a thousand yards northwest of the village when the order came to attack. Picketing their horses "A" and "C" squadrons advanced on foot and fought their way into the outskirts of the village. But enemy machine-gunners, strongly fortified in the church tower, could not be dislodged. Word was passed back to a battery of the R.C.H.A., who galloped up into action, unlimbering their guns under a storm of machine-gun fire, but quickly reducing the stronghold by shell fire at point-blank range. Many prisoners and much booty were captured with the village, which was held by the R.C.D's until relieved at three o'clock by our infantry.

Meanwhile the Strathcona's had not been idle. Riding down from Cayeux and refusing Beaucourt on their right, they attacked the considerable village of Le Quesnel, but the charge was stopped by the enemy's machine-guns in a sunken road. The two squadrons swung right and left, and here the major leading the charge got in advance of his men and with one corporal defended himself in the scrub for eleven hours, finally rejoining his command under cover of night.

The squadron that had swung off to the right crossed the Roye road and galloped into Fresnoy-en-Chaussee, surprising the garrison in rear and rounding up 150 prisoners. The enemy came back in force and the troop withdrew, rejoining the regiment with all its prisoners. In this village was presented the curious spectacle of a trooper leading a pack of ammunition mules, galloping with his reins over his arm and emptying his carbine into the enemy.

All next day, Aug. 9, the Brigade lay in support in the wood south of Cayeux. On Aug. 10 it was supposed the enemy was falling back on Roye and at noon the Brigade advanced to the high ground looking down over the battlefield on the east, the Fort Garry's and R.C.D's being in line and the Strathcona's in support. They advanced through Le Quesnel, Warvillers, Beaufort, Folies, Bouchoir and Le Quesnoy, taking up a position across the Roye road west of La Cambuse, a hamlet fifteen hundred yards southwest of Damery.

In front was the formidable 100-metre hill and wood known as Zed Wood, an immensely strong position, as has been described above. Erroneously as it turned out, General Paterson was informed that our infantry had taken Damery and the French were in possession of Andechy, and on the supposition that the enemy was falling back on the Somme through Roye—when the capture of the position must be of immense importance as enabling us to push in on his rear and thus secure a considerable tactical success—he was in his own mind quite justified in ordering that Zed Wood be taken at all costs.

A squadron of the Fort Garry's was detailed for the job and its commander went forward to reconnoitre. The terrific fire he thus drew only confirmed the hazard of the enterprise, but the attempt must be made. The squadron swept down the road with the intention of galloping the wood. But it was to certain destruction. The enemy held strong trench lines, crowded with infantry and studded with machine-guns, along each side of the highway, while from the encircling heights they poured in a withering shell fire. Owing to the trenches

and wire it was impossible to get off the road. The men rode on. One trooper got within a hundred yards of the wood before he too fell. Some empty saddles returned and at night half a dozen wounded men crawled back into our lines.

"Nothing like it's been seen in this war," said a veteran Canadian infantryman who was a spectator. "Neither Regina Trench nor Passchendaele was a patch on it. Those boys rode as if they were demented. Death stared them in the face before they had gone a hundred yards; but they just kept going."

Better fortune came to the other squadron of the Fort Garry's, Major Strachan, V.C. Advancing along the fatal road, the squadron while still west of Le Quesnoy came under very heavy machine-gun fire from the direction of Damery. It swung off the road south crossing into the French infantry lines, and then, galloping over trench and wire, captured the village of Andechy, and with it a very large enemy supply depot and a considerable number of prisoners. The squadron held the village in the face of repeated counter-attacks until ordered to withdraw, bringing off all its prisoners.

Mention may be made here of the brilliant exploit of a sergeant and five men of the Canadian Light Horse, recruited in the west, but which did not form part of the Canadian Cavalry Brigade, being included in the Canadian Corps Troops, and as such accompanied the Corps throughout these operations. On Aug. 9, while co-operating along the Roye road with Lancers and Scots Grays, this little party dashed out, shot up and stampeded an entire enemy convoy. Two of the men were killed, but the sergeant and the other three rejoined their troop.

On the night of Aug. 11 the Canadian Cavalry Brigade went back to Amiens and two days later returned to its depot at Hangest-sur-Somme. This was to be the last occasion it was to fight on the same field with the Canadian Corps. Thereafter it vanished into the blue, though from time to time reports came through of gallant deeds, notably its capture of Le Cateau.

The purpose of the cavalry was to push on through the anticipated break in the enemy lines and cut loose in his back areas, destroying dumps and communications. The opportunity never came. What was accomplished, gallant though it was, had little more than a localized effect, and after three days, when it was clear the line could not be broken, the cavalry was withdrawn. It had suffered heavily, but it had given proof of the greatest dash and initiative, tackling jobs that perhaps could have been accomplished at less cost by the slower-moving infantry.

It has been said that the day of the Cavalry is over; that in the execution of its chief functions it has been either superseded or neutralized; that whereas the work of reconnaissance is now carried out by aircraft, assisted by the telephone and wireless telegraphy, the opportunity of using cavalry in shock tactics becomes less and less as modern weapons are perfected, together with the now universal system of defense by trench and wire systems, supported by concentrated machine-gun fire; and finally it is pointed out that if the battle fronts of the future are to be continuous as in this war, the scope of the cavalry must be confined to two periods; the preliminary, before the opposing lines are joined in battle; and the final, when one side is giving way and the cavalry can be used with advantage to harry his retreat and raid his communications.

In this war the value of the cavalry in the early stage—in the retreat from Mons—was fully demonstrated; but the armistice cut short its fast developing opportunities which it was hoped would turn the retreat into a rout. Nothing developed in the Battle of Amiens to seriously impair the force of these criticisms. A few of the brilliant cavalry exploits have been noted above, but even the most hardy champion of the cavalry will not contend that the battle was won by the cavalry, or that it would have been lost without them—that the general result of the first two day's fighting would even have been seriously compromised had they been absent altogether. Apply the same test to the claims of the infantry and the artillery, and the

answer is obvious; and in lesser degree the tanks also proved indispensable—above all the tanks economized infantry losses. In the last analysis it was the man with the machine-gun, the man with the rifle and the man with the bomb and bayonet, that won our battles; always predicating powerful artillery support.

CHAPTER X

SIDELIGHTS OF BATTLE

THE first fury of the battle being spent, there comes a pause ten days have been continually on the move or in the firing and a rest for many of the tired troops who for a week to line. The battalions rest on the line they have reached, troops relieving them carrying on forward. Throughout these operations weather has been perfect and for once in our favor. There are no rains to ruin the operation as happened in the Salient a year before. Reinforcements and supplies, all gathered beforehand, are brought up with automatic regularity; but over everything is a sheet of white dust.

The men lie now in the shelter of woods, many sleeping in enemy blankets in enemy dug-outs, but the majority bunk on the ground, each man scooping for himself a shallow trench, as it might be the first excavation for a grave, proof against flying shrapnel. With night bombing going on and by day the enemy's heavy artillery searching likely bits of cover, safety lies in the open ground, but human nature feels less exposed under shelter of trees, and so the woods are populous. Bone-weary, they sleep off their fatigue.

But soon the battalion band strikes up; animated groups gather, talking over the battle and exhibiting their souvenirs—iron-crosses, automatic pistols, field-glasses, old-fashioned key-winding watches, officers' swords, regimental rings, shoulder-straps and buttons cut off protesting prisoners, queer wooden tobacco pipes quaintly carved—all manner of gear. A knot of men are gambling with sheafs of boldly printed paper marks—ten marks to the franc is their rate of exchange, not foreseeing the time but a few months away when in Belgium each of those marks is to be worth one franc thirty centimes. The men are in the best of moods and willingly talk about their exploits.

First we come across Brutinel's Independent Force. This consists of two Canadian Motor Machine-Gun Brigades, a six-inch Newton Mortar Section and a Wireless Section, all mounted in armored cars, together with the Canadian Corps Cyclist Battalion. The Force came straight up to the line and went into action with no rest. For three days they were hard at it and Saturday night was their first sleep. "It was good fun," said one of them. "The first chance we've had to do any fighting in our proper capacity. Did you hear how one of our cyclists took a village down on the Roye road? He was scouting and rode through the village full tilt, steering with one hand and with the other emptying his automatic into the flabbergasted Fritzies; he kept going right through and when one of our armored cars came up behind the whole garrison surrendered. Good sport it was along the Roye road that day—some real hunting."

The Amiens-Roye road here traverses a difficult country, bisected by ravines and bordered by woods offering excellent positions for machine-gun nests. Here at times the armored cars were held up and lost heavily. An enemy gun made a direct hit on one car, killing three of the crew and cutting off the arm of the gunner. Removing the body of the driver, this man, Corp. Cruise of Ottawa, swung round the shattered car, bringing it safely back into our lines. Then he died.

Less tragic was the experience of the crew of a ration lorry which in the twilight ran through our lines on the Roye road and only pulled up when challenged by an enemy sentry. Him they bayonetted. But it was too good to last. The Boche came back with bombs and put the lorry out of commission. Our men, however, though all wounded, crawled back to our lines in the darkness. Faced with loss of their rations, the unit advanced and recaptured the lorry, towing it back in triumph.

Padres are strictly non-combatant and unarmed. But when the 78th. Battalion, of Winnipeg, captured Hallu they found their chaplain, Capt. d'Easum, already in possession

with eight prisoners. "I went up there to help the boys through," he said, "with cigarettes and things, but found I'd blundered in ahead of the battalion. There was nothing else to do but put a bold face on it and these fellows here thought they were surrounded." The padre had a bullet wound in his cheek and four through his tunic—"a perfectly good coat ruined!" "Old Front Line" they called him, and told how at Passchendaele strictly against orders he was in the front line burying our dead when up comes the divisional senior chaplain. A reprimand was due, but—"Have you another spade?"—was all the Colonel said.

Here is another story of a Padre. Father R. MacGillivray of Antigonish, N.S., chaplain of the 5th Brigade, while ministering to the wounded where they fell on the field of battle south of Vrely, was forced to take shelter in a shell-hole, where he found the remnants of a company of which all officers were casualties. An enemy field battery a few hundred yards away was firing over open sights. Grasping the situation, Father MacGillivray called out, "Boys, we may as well die fighting." He leaped from the shell-hole and rushed the battery, followed by his brave boys. The boys say he terrified the Huns as with a wild war whoop and brandishing his cane he landed in their midst. The rest of the story is short as all hands went up with the cry of "Kamerad." The prisoners were numbered off and the guns were marked, "Captured by the 26th. Battalion." Some wag remarked it should have been, "Captured by Canadian Chaplain Service."

In the dense mist of the kick-off on Thursday, a section of five men of the 13th. Battalion, Montreal Highlanders, got separated from their unit and groping their way about came suddenly upon an enemy trench fully manned. The corporal, no whit abashed, gave the word to fire, when one after another over a hundred Boche came tumbling out of the trench, hands up. The five men safely delivered the batch at the divisional cage.

So great was the number of prisoners on the first day that

we could not spare escorts. They were told to go to the rear and for the most part went quietly. Two mounted men marshalled back over a thousand from the Divisional to the Corps cage. But they were not all like this. Three stout Wurtemburgers seized a broken-down tank and turned its guns on the back of our men, inflicting casualties. They put up a stiff defense, but presently out of the blue a bombing 'plane swooped down and dropped a bomb neatly on top of the tank.

Nothing was more inspiring to our men than the fine cooperation of the tanks, commanded by Imperial officers. Each ran his own show, and although there was a good deal of confusion in the fog, a gallant and resourceful lot they were. Many were our tried comrades, for they had fought with us at Vimy. "We will go anywhere with the Canadians," said one of them. "Such a show as you put on has never been seen in this war." Much the same thing was said on a later day by an officer of an Imperial heavy battery. "We would sooner be with you than with anyone, for we know that your wonderful infantry will exploit to the last yard the work of the gunners."

But the tanks suffered heavily, particularly in the wooded country. This is what a staff officer of the 11th. Brigade witnessed. A tank section of three was advancing in line ahead of our infantry when from the next field a battery opened at point-blank range. The first tank burst into flames—its course was run; the second stopped and the third also burst into flames. Then the second tank moved forward again—stopped—burst into flames. Out of the man-hole crawled two men, suffocating. A third thrust his arm from a gun-port, waving back the infantry; flames licked out to his hand

In the early stage of the advance the 54th. Battalion from the Kootenay came upon a wood alive with Boche, strongly entrenched in defenses the tanks had overrun. It was impossible to pass by without being mown down by flank fire. Seeing that his three companies in line were closely engaged, the battalion commander, Lt.-Col. A. B. Carey, of Nelson,

B. C., took personal command of the reserve company, organized it for defense and then led it in attack on a corner of the wood in face of heavy machine-gun fire. That portion of the wood thus cleared, the other companies were enabled to outflank it, capturing the garrison and proceeding to their objectives.

These incidents, selected at random, might be multiplied an hundredfold, and they leave untouched the record of public honors, of V.C.'s and the like. They were garnered from these tired men, gathered round their campfires, stitching rents made by barbed wire or drying out their sweaty shirts. Wonderful indeed their spirit. For the most part they went into battle after long marches and sleepless nights, and only their superb condition, fine discipline and unquenchable ardor carried them through. To go perhaps two or three days without sleep and but little food will try the stoutest heart. It was precisely into such a state of mind that during a lull in the battle one's enquiries were directed. Crossing the Channel but a few days before one had been struck by the fact that the nearer one got to the front line, the clearer was the note of confidence. In London—as in Montreal or Winnipeg —the defeatist had been at work. One had met but a day or two before a highly-placed Canadian officer who despaired of victory; and as for the politicians, with them it had become a question whether the "Sammies" were to be in time to save us—whether we could keep going till the spring of 1919. But these fellows had taken the measure of the Boche, and they knew that he was beaten, if not this year, then surely the next.

But even here are discriminations. Hot-blood youth doesn't care how long the war goes on; it is his great adventure; to him it is "a lovely war." But fathers of families, staid citizens enlisted only from an imperative sense of duty; these have a different angle. "Shan't we have peace this fall?" asks a tough old Blue-nose. One points out that we can have a peace at any time, but such a peace as is only a truce. "Never

that," he replies. "We'll fight it out here and now; I can't leave it to my boy."

"We're all fed up with the war, that's a cinch," says the N. C. O. of a Saskatchewan battalion. "None of us like it, but we'll carry through to October, 1919—if that's your date—or 1920 if we must; but the peace must be the real thing. We must rub Fritzie's nose in the dust good and plenty."

And then there is the company of adventurers, old prospectors from the mountains, trappers of the wild, shanty-men from the back-woods, men whose whole life has been a gamble with death; and for these, war is the greatest game of all. "This is a real good show and we shan't be satisfied till we're in again," says one. And there is a private who fought with the 52nd. Battalion in front of Damery—military medal and bar, who works on survey parties out of Edmonton, Alta. "The best fun I ever had," he said. "I've had many a moose fight and have tussled with the grizzly in the Rockies, but this beat all. I used up two of our rifles and then grabbed a Boche—fired all my ammunition and two bandoliers more, borrowing off the men who came up in support. My rifle got so hot I had to work the bolt with my foot. The longest range was two hundred yards, most of it seventy-five to a hundred—and every shot a bull. One of our Lewis guns fired off thirty-four pans. I'd never seen so many dead in my life; it was like spraying a potato patch. Our colonel is a real general or our number would have been up."

The men are wonderful; so too are the battalion officers, and one cannot withhold one's admiration from the juniors, who shared the dangers of the rank and file—as their casualties show—and yet carried the added responsibility of leadership. Here is the story of a posthumous V. C., Lieut. Brillant of the 22nd. Battalion, French-Canadians: "For the most conspicuous gallantry and almost superhuman devotion to duty during the operations of Aug 8 and 9," the official record goes. "He was in charge of a company which he led during

the two days with absolute fearlessness and extraordinary ability and initiative. At about one o'clock in the afternoon of Aug. 9, just after the day's attack had begun, his company's left flank was held up by an enemy machine-gun. He rushed in and captured the gun, personally killing two of the gun crew. While doing this he was wounded in the thigh but he refused to be evacuated. A little after three o'clock the same day his company was held up by heavy machine-gun fire from a machine-gun nest in a group of houses. He personally reconnoitred the ground, organized a party of two platoons and rushed straight for the machine-gun nest. Here 150 Germans and 15 machine-guns were captured. The Lieutenant personally killed five Germans and being wounded a second time, now in the shoulder which he had immediately dressed, again refused to be evacuated.

"About six in the evening of the same day he saw a field gun firing on his men with open sights from a neighboring wood. He immediately organized and led a rushing party towards the gun. After progressing about 600 yards he was seriously wounded in the abdomen. In spite of this third wound, he continued to advance some 200 yards when he fell unconscious from exhaustion and loss of blood. His wonderful example throughout the day fired his men with an enthusiasm and fury which largely contributed towards the battalion's noble achievements." This was in the attack on Meharicourt. He died that night.

Another posthumous V. C. was Lieut. James Edward Tait, of the 78th. Battalion of Winnipeg, "for most conspicuous bravery and initiative in attack." The advance on Hallu having been checked by intense machine-gun fire, Lieut. Tait rallied his company and led it forward with consummate skill and dash under a hail of bullets. A concealed machine-gun, however, continued to cause many casualties. Taking a rifle and bayonet Lieut. Tait dashed forward alone and killed the enemy gunner, crying, "Come on boys: the 78th. don't mind machine-guns!" Inspired by his example his men rushed the

position, capturing 12 machine-guns and 20 prisoners. Later, when the enemy counter-attacked our positions under intense artillery bombardments, this gallant officer displayed outstanding courage and leadership, and, though mortally wounded by a shell, continued to direct and aid his men until his death.

Owing to the exigencies of the British Press censorship in France, whose instruction from G. H. Q. was that for a certain period the participation in this great battle of the Canadian Corps must not be published, the people of Canada learned of the victory two or three days before they became aware of the conspicuous part taken in it by their sons and brothers. It was indeed a Canadian Corps' battle, planned by the Corps and "zero" hour fixed by the Corps. What that part was is best summed up in the words of an impartial critic, the special correspondent in France of the London *Times*. Reviewing the course of events a few weeks later he says: "In the first scene of our offensive, which began Aug. 8, the actors were chiefly overseas. Men from the British Isles took only a small part of the attack north of the Somme to protect the flank of the Australians. South of the river, below here on the main battlefront, the honor of the first advance was shared by the Australians and Canadians. In structure it was chiefly a Canadian battle. It was their advance on the Luce that was the core and crux of the operation, and on their progress depended the advance of the Australians on their left and that of the successive French armies on their right, each of which was thrown in only as the advance above it prospered. The Canadians, I think, are right in claiming that the fighting of these first two days was the biggest thing Canada has done in the war, not excepting the recapture of Vimy Ridge. Certainly nothing could have been better."

The Canadian Corps, flushed with victory, was to go on to bigger things yet. The impression one bore away of the Amiens show was of a kind of picnic; there, indeed, the viands were war rations, and the skittle-alleys, machine-gun emplacements; but where, nevertheless, there was, after the

dreary months of the trenches, a sense of change and holiday; sight of green fields and growing things; a clatter of movement and good humor. We were going back to quite a different thing—to the long road stretching from Arras to Cambrai, a field of bloody footsteps, mire and death.

CHAPTER XI

LESSONS OF THE BATTLE

"WAR is the last thing to go according to programme," said Thucydides, and the maxim never had a more striking application than in this battle of Amiens. The enemy were preparing to attack when upon them fell the avalanche. It was all very disconcerting. For the moment they were overwhelmed. Those of their front line troops who escaped capture "had their wind up," and spread consternation behind. Besides they had lost all their guns. Except stout machine-gunners in strictly localized defenses, we met very little organized opposition the first day. And our great store of prisoners, guns and material of all kinds was precisely due to the enemy having been massed forward for the assault set for a couple of days later.

But as we went forward, conditions began to change in their favor. It is another maxim of war that an attack weakens in its thrust as it progresses; so at the end of the third day, our blow having lost some of its first impetus, being restricted in its full swing by the course of the battle on either flank, and meeting more and more determined resistance from the enemy—who had thrown in a number of fresh divisions and again gathered together a respectable body of artillery—our advance perceptibly slowed down. We were coming too into a bad country. Hitherto, as we have seen, the enemy's organized defense had been rudimentary; he had paid little attention to his trench system and there was a minimum of wire. But now we were to advance into the old Somme battlefield, traversed by ancient trench lines, festooned by rusted wire, and passing off solid ground to marsh lands, while in our immediate front lay the strong defense line linking up Roye and Chaulnes.

It was with these considerations before him that Sir Arthur Currie made very strong representations to the high command to the effect that the Canadian Corps having successfully accomplished its allotted task as storm troops, should be pulled out of that area before its bright temper became dulled, to be used in a similar operation on another front, for which he suggested the Bapaume sector as most suitable.

However, it was decided that the Corps should do more spade work until at least the French offensive had developed further in the direction of Roye. There was a prospect, too, that the offensive on our left flank, reduced north of the Somme to a static condition before Bray, and thus in turn holding back our immediate neighbors, the Australians, might develop more favorably; when the attacking front would broaden and the Canadian Corps be relieved from its salient, offering new opportunities for further successful exploitation towards the Somme.

The desultory fighting that followed—desultory not that it was easy but because it led nowhere in particular—proved very expensive for the Canadian Corps, whose task, subjected as it was to a galling enfilade fire, resolved itself into the storming of individual villages. In fact there was the prospect that we were going to run into another blind alley after the fashion of the offensive of 1916. "On to the Somme", was the talk in the ranks, but without a true appreciation of the difficulties.

When therefore the word reached us that we were to be relieved by French divisions, there was general satisfaction. We understood of course that it meant we were to have a go in elsewhere. It is worth noting here that Field-Marshal Haig in his "Victory Dispatch" endorses the opinion submitted by the Canadian Corps Commander. "By the evening of Aug. 12," he writes, "our infantry had reached the old German Somme defenses of 1916, on the general line west of Damery, east of Lihons, east of Proyart, having repulsed with severe loss determined counter-attacks in the neighborhood

of Lihons. North of the Somme we were on the western outskirts of Bray-sur-Somme.

"The derelict battle area which now lay before our troops, seared by old trench lines, pitted with shell holes, and crossed in all directions with tangled belts of wire, the whole covered by the wild vegetation of two years, presented unrivalled opportunities for stubborn machine-gun defenses. Attacks carried out on Aug. 13 proved the strength of these positions, and showed that the enemy, heavily reinforced, was ready to give battle for them. I therefore determined to break off the battle on this front, and transferred the front of attack from the Fourth Army to the sector north of the Somme, where an attack seemed unexpected by the enemy. My intention was for the Third Army to operate in the direction of Bapaume so as to turn the lines of the old Somme defenses from the north. The French First Army now ceased to be under my command.

"Meanwhile, south of the Somme, our pressure was to be maintained, so as to take advantage of any weakening on the part of the enemy and encourage in him the belief that we intended to persist in our operations on that front. During the succeeding days, local attacks gave us possession of Damery, Parvillers and Fransart, and made progress also at other points."

In fact, our whole conduct of the war had changed under the masterly direction of Foch. Our attacks henceforth were to be restricted in their objectives and only to be developed as their successful progress opened out without too great cost further fields for exploitation, In effect, the Battle of Amiens was now broken off, so far as the British forces went, and there immediately opened the less ambitious but locally successful attack in the direction of Bapaume. Then in turn came the Battle of Arras and the breaking of the Hindenburg Line by the Canadian Corps. Thereafter the whole fabric of the enemy defense began to give way and it was the beginning of the end.

Before leaving the battlefield some tactical considerations are worthy of note. It cannot be said that in its broad aspects the battle presented any new tactical features; it merely applied successfully the plan Sir Julian Byng had originated for his Third Army in the First Battle of Cambrai of the preceding November. He failed, relatively at least to his hopes, because he had not at his disposal sufficient forces to exploit his initial success, nor even to properly defend the ground won. But that did not invalidate his plan, which consisted of a surprise attack, unaccompanied by artillery preparation, the free use of tanks being counted on to break the road for the infantry, combined with an intensive barrage laid down on the enemy front and support lines and battery positions.

That plan changed the nature of the combat on the West Front, converting it from trench fighting to open warfare; the enemy was quick to adopt it in his March offensive; and with perfect success, his means being adequate to his purpose. It was now for the first time successfully employed by the British arms. The plan was developed to its highest extent by the employment of a tremendous barrage, designed to carry the infantry deep into enemy territory; by the presence of an unprecedented number of tanks, including the newly perfected "whippets"; by the bringing up of the Cavalry Corps; and last, but not least, by the co-operation of the Independent Force under General Brutinel of Canadian Motor Machine-Gun Brigades and Cyclists.

Brutinel's Independent Force, as we have seen, did valuable and particularly gallant work along the Roye road, where in the early stage of the battle it acted as the liason between the French and our own Third Division. But it too was denied the chance of breaking through, and because its operations were necessarily confined to metalled roads, held everywhere in great strength by the enemy, its offensive role was limited. Its 1st. Brigade was fighting over the same ground where it had won imperishable fame in the March retreat.

Over one hundred heavy tanks were assigned to the attack,

and of these two-thirds had become casualties from one cause and another by the end of the third day. Some were "walking wounded" cases only, but many were destroyed by direct hits. Without question the tanks played a great and formidable part in this battle, and if the war had continued another year no doubt they would have become a still more effective arm. But that they were not vital to success was proved by the Canadian Corps later on, when its supply of tanks, at first scanty, rapidly was reduced to the vanishing point.

The tank indeed, and its tactical management, was still in process of evolution even up to the close of hostilities. It was perhaps Britain's greatest material contribution to the war. Early tanks failed, or achieved but a moiety of success, because they were too slow and too vulnerable. The enemy, after his first shock of surprise, affected to take them lightly, but nevertheless captured documents proved that he was anxious, commanders being warned to be prepared, to pay special attention to anti-tank defense, and to train men with the anti-tank guns—a magnified rifle weighing thirty-five pounds of which several fell into our hands in the Amiens show. The great width and depth of the Hindenburg ditch was designed to stop tanks. After the considerable French success with tanks southwest of Soissons in July and our own in the present battle, his alarms increased. His own tanks were a failure, because of poor design, the flat underbody preventing the climbing of obstacles. And he never had enough to make them really formidable.

In the Amiens show the tanks were massed and the wastage was so great that replacements on the same scale were difficult, especially as the widening of the battle line made an effective tank concentration more and more out of the question. In the Arras offensive very few tanks were in our line, and in the Battle of Cambrai, because of the impassable nature of canals and rivers encountered, they were almost entirely absent. Very few in fact were left at all in the closing stages of the great offensive, and a localized concentration to over-

come machine-gun resistance became impossible. Had it been otherwise our casualties would have been lighter.

For the tank is the ideal weapon for destroying machine-gun nests. Time after time in the Amiens show tanks were driven right over these emplacements, either killing or capturing their garrisons. If war comes again in our time, the tank has a great future. The "whippets" have a special mission of their own, the up-to-date cavalry. But the heavy tank must also have sufficient speed to keep well ahead of infantry on necessity, strong enough armor-plating to resist all but direct hits by field-guns, powerful offensive armament to overcome strong fortified posts, and such bulk and engine-power as can traverse not only natural obstacles (except canals and rivers) but the protective ditches dug by the enemy.

Above all they must have wider range of vision and be in direct communication not only with their own units but with other arms, especially infantry. For at present the tank, once started, is a law unto itself and too often becomes detached. In the darkness and fog of the early morning of Aug. 8 they often lost their way, overrunning their objectives or missing them altogether. Compasses were useless because of the mass of metal and shut in that fiery box a general survey is impossible. One tank was observed coming back from the front line when its commander supposed he was working forward.

Even in the last days of the war, there appeared to be two schools of thought in regard to tank tactics. One, as exemplified in the Amiens show, was that long lines of tanks should go in ahead of the infantry and overrun the enemy. In many cases they sailed right over dug-outs and past machine-gun posts they could not see in the mirk, so that our infantry following up had a hard time of it. And the trouble was that when a tank was wanted to reduce such a fortified point, the infantry had no means of making their need known. The other was that the tanks should be held in leash close up behind the infantry, to be employed on individual work as required.

A quite possible development might be that each brigade, or even each battalion, would have its own tank section, to work in tactical conjunction. Extraordinary gallant men, these tank crews; the "suicide club" our boys called them; one of our officers, a very brave man, went forward in one of them to reconnoitre. When finally he was let out he shook his fist at his hosts; "Never again, demon, will I enter your scalding bowels!"

Tank crews, indeed, were under a terrible strain, both physical and mental, greater even than that of the stokers of a battleship in action. In that confined space, filled with poisonous gases, the atmosphere was all but insupportable. Tank crews have been known to come out of their fortress and thrown themselves on the ground in utter exhaustion amid the full fury of an enemy barrage. A full day's battle such as Aug. 8, played them out, and there was great difficulty in getting the tank crews back into shape for the battle of the following day. That, indeed, was to some extent the cause for our delay in continuing the offensive on Aug. 9. In such a case the strategist, laying out his battle for the morrow, is apt to overlook the purely physical element of his problem. Where the fighting is to be continuous over a period of days it is necessary to furnish relief crews for the tanks.

A good number of Canadians were scattered through the tank crews, but it was an Imperial service, the great majority of officers and men being Old Country. If the war had gone on a Canadian Tank Division would have been created. As it was, complete mutual confidence existed between our infantry and the tanks. As explained, these were limited in their scope, but that was the inherent defect of the machine and not of the crew.

So important was the part of the tank in the battle that this rather lengthy digression may be permitted. We have seen that there was nothing particularly novel about the tactics of the Amiens show, but the whole plan was brought to the highest perfection and the employment of a fresh and thor-

oughly trained body of troops such as the Canadian Corps assured success in advance.

As it turned out, the weight of the battle fell on the Canadian Corps, but that was not the original design. The Fourth Army was to advance on its entire front, with British troops on the left, the Australians in the centre and Canadians on the right, the most difficult ground perhaps being assigned to the latter. When this movement had well developed, the French First Army was to take up the battle on our right. But this programme was diverted by reason of the situation north of the Somme. Here the enemy had attacked the III British Corps in great strength two days before, and was bringing up reserves for a further thrust in the development of his intended general offensive against Amiens. It turned out therefore that instead of making much progress, troops in this sector had all they could do to hold their own. The hope of recovering the strong point of Bray—needlessly given up in March—fell to the ground. As a consequence the left of the Australian Corps was obliged to conform, and though its centre pushed well forward and its right kept pace with ourselves, it was unable to attain tactical freedom of manoeuvre.

On the other hand, our right, the French battle went so well after it had gained momentum, that it spread far to the south, eventually including Montdidier, and the effect of this was to make the Canadian area the pivotal centre of the entire battle front. At all stages, and until we gave over to the French, our line was in greater or less degree a marked salient, and this of course exposed our men to enfilade artillery fire, now from one flank, now from the other, and sometimes from both. It is necessary to have a clear picture of this in order to appreciate the sterling character of their work, especially in such tactical adventures as the capture of Chilly, Hallu, Parvillers, Damery, Fransart and La Chavette.

Their success was not brought about by accident. Skilled and patient staff work, perfect organization by both "A" and "Q" branches, the devoted efforts of the Canadian Engineers

and Army Service Corps, fine qualities of leadership from divisional commanders right down to the veteran N. C. O's—all these contributed; but the greatest factor of all were the men themselves, highly disciplined, fresh from a period of intensive training, and conspicuous in the qualities of initiative and resource that had stood the Canadian soldier in such good stead on many a hard-fought field. One need not speak of their courage—the common heritage of the nations—but they possessed in a peculiar degree the quality of the race that declines to envisage defeat and will not be denied victory.

The moral effect of this great victory was far-reaching. For the first time for many a long day troops of the British armies had taken the offensive on the grand scale and had demonstrated that man for man, in leadership and technical equipment, they were the superior of the enemy. That was the great contribution that the Canadian Corps—and with them the Australians—made to the cause of the Allies on Aug. 8; they restored confidence in the British arms—weakened in morale and repute in the sight both of our Allies and the enemy since the sad days of March—not only to the rank and file of the armies themselves but to the world at large.

Looking back over but a few months—yet this nevertheless a gulf fast obliterating memory and almost impassable to the imagination—from the sure vantage ground of British victories in every theatre of the war, it seems all but incredible that in those days immediately preceding Amiens, and notwithstanding the demonstration of the French on the Marne, doubts actually existed of the ability of the British armies to carry out a successful offensive. Yet so it was. These doubts, totally without justification as the event proved, were finally dispelled on Aug. 8.

Thus ended the "L. C. Operation," as it was named by the Canadian Corps Staff, for the battle-cry on the morning of Aug. 8 was, "Remember the Llandovery Castle"—the hospital ship sunk in the Irish Sea just before with Canadian medical officers and nurses on board.

And what did the enemy think of it? Von Hutier, who

commanded in this front, was brother-in-law of Ludendorff, and the best face must be put on it. "We were up against the elite of the French Army and the celebrated Canadian Corps," said the German Higher Staff.

It is not generally known that this great Battle of Amiens was intended to be the last British offensive on the West Front in 1918, and it was only because of the unexpected success attained that our offensives were everywhere continued. The original programme—granted a reasonable measure of success such as should free the Amiens-Paris railway—was that thereafter the troops should settle down into winter quarters, and await the coming of the American armies to renew the offensive in the spring of 1919. This bold stroke, in which the Canadian Corps had so striking a part, not only opened the floodgates of victory but saved for us the long weary months of trench warfare and the heavy casualties they entail.

With Ludendorff Aug. 8 is obviously an obsession. We have seen above something of his opinion. "The eighth of August," he says in another place, "marked the downfall of our fighting strength and destroyed our hopes of strategic amelioration. To continue the war was to start a gamble. The war had to be ended."

He returns again and again to the fatal day. "The eighth of August (1918) is the black day of the German Army in the history of the war. I have experienced none worse except during the events beginning with Sept. 15, which took place on the Bulgarian front and sealed the fate of the Central Powers. The English Colonials and the French broke deep into our line between the Somme and the Luce, where our Divisions were completely overrun. Six or seven German Divisions, which could be described as thoroughly fit for battle, had been defeated. Two or three Divisions and the remnants of the defeated forces were ready to close the wide gap between Bray and Roye." And he concludes by speaking of the contemplated retirement in this section of the line. "This movement," he says, "was decided upon the night of Aug. 9-10. If it did not succeed a great allied victory was possible."

CHAPTER XII

FRENCH SCENES

ON the morning of Aug. 8 the first echelon of Canadian Corps Headquarters moved to Gentelles, but already this was too far behind the lines and almost at once another move was made to Demuin, on the Luce. In a ravine about a thousand yards south of the village—as had been plotted out by our Intelligence long before the battle opened—was an enemy regimental headquarters, and here the Corps stayed a full week. As usual there were some elaborate dug-outs, but not enough to accommodate all the staff, most of whom slept under canvas.

This ravine winds among the folds of chalk hills, trending south to the Roye road. A little further on lies a broken tank, hit by an enemy gun that still stands a couple of hundred yards away. The tank had been working its way along the ravine when its career was stopped. Beside it are three graves. Artificers are busy repairing its shattered treads and in an incredibly brief time it will trundle on its way again.

From the upland is a wonderful sunset, painting the heavens the color of blood. Upon the crest of the western slope, black against the glow, is the scarred outline of Hamon wood, where a few days before our Third Division had a tough fight. Once it was gay with flowers but there lie now in the stained pools of shell-holes only corpses rotting in their field-gray. Our burial parties are over-taxed.

Descending the hill we come upon a lonely pit where a gunner stands silent beside his "Archie," for these moonlight nights "Heine" has a regular schedule of bombing visitations. He is glad to talk and confesses himself something of a poet; he produces a copy of verses, scribbled on the back of an envelope—happy soldier, spinning rhymes beneath the stars,

themselves his theme, and love of country and hate of the destroyer!

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We are dozing off in our tent—sunk three feet beneath the ground for safety from the flying shrapnel of these bombing raids—when on the silence a bugle rings out, a note weird as that of the coyote under a prairie moon. "Lights out; lights out!" passes the word. "Heine's coming." Sure enough he is. But before we hear his angry insect hum, miles it seems above us, there comes the quick rattle of the "Archies," the anti-aircraft guns. As heads poke out, shafts of light—long beams of whitest light—shoot up from a dozen unexpected quarters, searching the sky methodically for the bold intruder.

They sweep the sky indefatigably. Some one with night glasses cries they are below him—now they are nearer—they have got him! They focus on one spot and he stands out clear enough, a flitting iridescent glow-worm. The "Archies" redouble their fire; we see the flashes bursting round him. His machine-gun rattles back down the avenues of white light. They lose him and catch him again. Suddenly a series of dull explosions—crrmp—crrmp—crrmp; as quick as you can count. He is getting rid of his bombs; it is too hot for him. Soon his drone dies away in the east, but not before there have been more dull thudding reports, distinguishable from all kinds of shell fire.

It is seldom they get him. In the air the vertical plane is added to the gunner's problem, whereas on the surface his equations are confined to the lateral and horizontal. But the defense, especially the search-lights, captured by us from the Boche, keep him high up, where his bombing becomes a thing of chance, hit or miss. But on another occasion he gets a bunch of our horses, picketed round the corner.

He is going back to his base to tell his story of destruction —on a bare hillside—and in a couple of hours he'll be back reloaded. But the air is chill and blankets warm.

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Not content with their brilliant capture of Zed Wood, recorded above, the French First Army are pushing on south of us, now well up to our right flank. They are putting on a little show of their own this afternoon in front of Roye. They have taken Cæsar's Camp west of the town, and now seek to exploit their success from the south. Armed with a pass from General Demetz, Commander of their 56th. Division, one has the privilege of seeing something of it under guidance of a charming French officer of Intelligence.

Roye lies low down in the valley and from the plateau on which we stand nothing can be seen but the smoke of bursting shells in its northern quarter, where already the French have established themselves in the railway station. The battle itself is in progress at our feet in the marshy tree-studded valley of the Avre, being directed against the strongly fortified village of St. Mard-lez-Triot. We can see nothing of it, save for an occasional rocket marking the progress of the infantry, signal for the barrage to lift; and for the angry explosions of enemy shells along the trench lines on the opposing plateau, where presumably are massed the French reserves.

It does not matter. In these bright weeks villages such as this—so recently impregnable strongholds—are stormed every day. Of greater interest is the spirit of the French soldier, the "poilu," from whose soul speaks the ardent voice of France. Our guide is explaining the difficulties of the attack up the valley, past concrete machine-gun emplacements hidden in the marshes. "We hardly hope to succeed here," he says, "But it is a demonstration in aid of our advance further south." He is wrong; soon a rocket goes up from the village itself. "Yes, they have given us a tight corner; but what would you? some one has to have it."

We have called him "Captain"; no, he is only lieutenant. "A simple soldier, Monsieur, who at the outbreak of war was a wine merchant in Burgundy. I had served my three years of course, and joined as a sergeant. Now I have charge of the Intelligence of the regiment."

"You have very gallant men," he goes on. "You are fresh and full of go. We have been at it so long we are tired; our hearts are sad, but now before us is the end and we will see it through. Alas! for the poor people of this country. In March I was in Montdidier and the women of the town crowded round us. 'Are the Boche coming?' they ask. 'We do not know but it is better you should move out.' Then comes the question, 'What shall we take?' What can they take? Their men and their horses are all in the army; there remain only the push-cart and the wheel-barrow. They take next to nothing. And in a few days the Boche have destroyed everything—everything; wantonly, where their shelling has not completed the ruin. On your way back go and see the ribs of Montreuil."

We are standing on top of an "O-Pip" (observation post), built up by the Germans amid the trees on the valley slope. Below lies a shattered village and ruined church—St. Aurin. "It is horrible to see all this," one says, "and to think that we in Canada have escaped scot free—only the lives of our men." "Ah," he says, "but is not sorrow a strength to the character, a completion of experience—shall we not emerge a stronger people for it all?"

We are in a trench examining a bayonet, a beautiful rapier-like piece of polished steel. "How you bring your sense of art and beauty into everything," one cannot help remarking. "Look at your camouflage, what art it is, suiting itself perfectly to the changing aspects of soil and landscape; while ours too often is a matter of rule of thumb."

"That may be so," he replies. "But you have your admirable perseverance. To each nation its own qualities. To the Hun that of the beast."

Of a saddened countenance is the French soldier. The tragedy of war has transmuted the once merry fellow. They lack too the outward smartness of our infantry. But the spirit is there. "On to the Rhine!" we cry to one of them. He lights up at once. "That is the perfect word, Monsieur," he says with a grin.

One takes away a sense of what the French Army has suffered and endured. Compared with ourselves, they lack deplorably all manner of material and equipment—their guns worn out, ammunition depleted, their horses emaciated and with few lorries for transport, the "poilu" himself a pack-mule on the march. But after all these long years, when they have borne the brunt in defeat and in victory, their men are incomparable, their spirit unquenched.

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It is Aug. 19 and we are back again in Dury, just twelve days since we left this sad and dreary village. Nothing but dust and troops and lorries. Occasionally through a tall gateway is the glimpse of an old woman, doubled under a load of straw. Much more rarely a child. One little estaminet is open where they sell red and white wine of the sourest vintage.

All the villages of this part of France are ugly. Built right out to the street are the stables and out-houses—blank walls pierced by inhospitable double gates. You enter your billet through what is essentially the backyard, a manure pile in its centre and cart shed on either hand. Back is the decent little house, two-storied, very old, weather-stained, sadly lacking a coat of paint and a rambler rose. You walk through across the inevitable tiled floor to the back. Hey, presto! what a change is here. A charming garden, stocked with good things to eat, fruit trees and flowers, and behind a hedge and a field rolling down into a green valley.

Nevertheless the cobbled streets are ugly beyond compare, high gray blank walls, shuttered windows, smokeless chimneys and clouds of dust shrouding the passing transport. Beyond the village the landscape is bare, for not here are the nestling red-roofed farmhouses of old England. It is a communal life, dear to the French peasant heart. Madame may chat over the wall to her neighbor, knitting the while and keeping an eye on the simmering pot. The French peasant likes company and he sits of an evening in the village park, sipping his glass and swapping news with his cronies. Thus is explained the utter

ruin the invader has wreaked upon the countryside. His target is not isolated farms but densely populated villages, containing within their scant area all the rural population. Better for the French peasants if they had lived in scattered homesteads.

We have been away a bare fortnight. When we return all is changed. Gossips and laughing children enliven the street. Dury has little to show of scars. Here and there the Boche has left his mark—screaming bombs from out the night, or the devastation of a long-distance gun. But it has suffered in foreboding. Last spring the tide of battle lapped very close to its thresholds. At any hour the enemy might select its humble area for bombardment. All the bigger houses—the Chateaux—are long closed, their owners in happier climes. Only the village folk have clung to their village. They had nowhere else to go—to their village and their poor chattels, their cow and their waddling geese. The good Curé remains to watch over his flock and deplore the ruined tower of his gray old church. But now the foe is many miles away and the village saved—saved with the wrecked city of Amiens.

In those days we saw many villages in far worse plight. There was Domart, a ruin swaddled in dust; dust, dust everywhere, red dust from the brick of broken homes, bathing the passing lorries along the Roye road. There was Marcelcave, a cemetery of houses, only the skeletons, instead of decent burial, loom white and gaunt against the sky. Constructed of century old timber framing, these still stand after the tiles and plaster have melted into dust. Such stricken villages do not present the magnificent ruin of Ypres, nor are they a flat and disregarded desert like Neuville St. Vaast, at foot of Vimy Ridge. But they are very horrible. There is something indecent about their stark ribs.

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At midnight of Aug. 21-22 comes the moving order. "Secret and Confidential—Lorry No. so-and-so will be at the door of your billet at 5.45 a.m.—no breakfasts served in

messes after 6 a.m.—destination unstated." On such occasion the Camp Commandant is the best hated man in Corps, for there seems a certain malignity in these midnight alarums. At last one was going to put in a good night's sleep—to catch up needed arrears; but no, there will be little sleep this night, with the problem of squeezing a gallon of gear into a quart pot; treasured "souvenirs" must go into the discard.

Once again on the move, we discover we have a full day for the relatively short jaunt to Hautecloque, south of St. Pol, and can spend some hours in Amiens, a year ago the joyous congregation of young officers on leave, but now deserted, empty streets echoing to the passing hoof-beat.

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A truly pious nation, the French; a people of reverence for the fine things of life. Their piety today takes other direction than that of yesterday. It kneels at the shrine of an idea, of France. In all their churches is to be seen the shining figure of Jeanne d'Arc. Their national heroine broods over them, an idea that has triumphed in this war over material fact, over 450-centimetre guns.

Every cross-road has its shrine, and in every little hamlet the village church stands a monument of ancient art and piety, the treasured storehouse of the community from generation to generation, enriched by free fancy. However dull the village street, there lifts out of its foliage a slender fretted spire, or, maybe, a hoary tower, sign manual of the spiritual life below. War has quickened that life. Not in vain calls the church bell to matins and vespers. In no land is the beauty of sacrifice as well understood as in France.

Thousands of these humble altars lie in ruin, more ruinous than the ruined villages, singled out malignantly. It was not by his design that the great cathedral of Amiens escaped almost unscathed. Its topmost pinnacles are far below the level of the immediate hills and yet for four months it has been the target of long-range guns and bombing planes. Draw a circle of a hundred yards around it and everywhere is destruction. The

glorious Gothic west front, still sandbagged many feet up, is pitted with shrapnel. Good saints in their niches have lost arms and legs. It is a miracle that it has so escaped, to be for generations to come a shrine for pious pilgrims who may see in its scarred but stately lines the symbol of the indomitable nation that kept alight through storm and ravage and woe the torch of civilization.

Only an ecclesiastical architect can write of such things—at every turn the layman exposes himself. But it is impossible to pass by Amiens cathedral without catching something of its spirit and its meaning.

The popular, the picture-postcard, view is the west front, with its irregular twin towers, its great rose window and all the lavish ornament of decorated Gothic. It is a fine example of that kind of thing—such an impression is here deliberately cultivated as might be that of a woman attired for the chief event in her life. But this ornate richness and luxury of treatment is not what appeals in the particular connection. Curiously enough it is restricted entirely to the west façade, for the rest is art reduced to the finest simplicity of free-springing perpendicular columns and arches, delicate tracery, flying buttresses and high-shouldering roofs. Here and there this austere and chaste expression breaks out into rebellious phantasies of gargoyle and quaint grotesque, roughly carved from the solid block.

The aspect one loves is the intimate view of the basilica from the foot of Rue Victor Hugo, a vista of gray stone and purple slate, an impression of devout aspiring feeling that deliberately carries the eye unchecked and unencumbered by superfluous ornament up and up and up to the pinnacle of the wonderful little Gothic spire super-imposed upon the cross of the building that from any other view—it is not visible from the west front—seems unmeaning and even absurd. From earth to the high elysium is its message, and to pass thence into the square and thus confront the florid elegance of the west façade is to fall from heaven to earth again.

The same pure and simple beauty is to be found within. Most of the old glass has been removed, and gone too is much of the gilt and tinsel that too often obscure and distract the noble lines of these buildings. The interior is reduced to its simplest values, without ornament, such as it was conceived and executed by its monk builders. It is a house cleansed by war like unto the people of France. There is little but the bare beauty of form and light, but the impression is of an immensity. The nave is subdivided by lofty shafts and bold arches, simple variations of the trefoil prevailing. Its surpassing beauty is due to these gracious lines and their high uplift to the vaulting of the ceiling. Wide untrammelled spaces and the clear sunlight streaming through the tracery of great unglazed windows give the impression of open skies and "the wind upon the heath." Not here the mystery of stained glass, dim perspectives and glorious shrines, but the flinging wide of doors, the sweeping down of cobwebs.

Back of the high altar and facing the rich frescoes of the Lady Chapel is a simple relief dated 1628, "To the worthy memory of Johannis Delagrange, one time episcopal ambassador and cardinal." He lies there in stone effigy and his cardinal's hat at his feet. Another slab perpetuates the charity he established for the poor children of the diocese. A worthy man, this Lord Archbishop of Amiens; and a proud, without doubt.

In and about this great temple Canadian and Australian soldiers reverently wander; they see in it something mystic, the pledge of their victory, its vast echoing spaces peopled by their comrades who have laid down their lives.

Against this pile of gray stone wherein lies enshrined the feeling of all the ages the Hun hurled his implacable hate. In its drive of Aug. 8 and 9, the Canadian Corps captured half a dozen 5.9-inch naval guns, with a range of 25,000 yards, and there is reason to suspect some of these were the very long-distance rifles that sought to destroy the cathedral of Amiens. Of direct hits possible to identify two at least are of this calibre.

One destroyed the northeast chapel of the ambulatory; another the organ platform under the rose window, but the organ, a famous piece, had been removed to the crypt.

Amiens cathedral is now safe. Yet another bond was thus knit between the peoples of France and of Canada. Over the great altar hang the flags of French regiments, and among them the Stars and Stripes. The ensign of Canada might here well find a worthy resting place.

ARRAS

ARRAS

CHAPTER I

PLANNING ATTACK ON HINDENBURG LINE

WE have seen that Canadian Corps Headquarters moved from Amiens to Hautecloque on the morning of Aug. 22. Its stay here was of the briefest, a move being made early next morning to Noyelle Vion, and the interest of Hautecloque in the annals of the Corps lies solely in the fact that here the plan of battle on the Arras front was prepared.

Great as had been the moral effect of the successful Amiens offensive, followed up immediately by the attack of the Third Army between Albert and Arras, what was to follow was designed to be much more far-reaching in its effect, namely, the breaking of the Hindenburg line and the driving in of the enemy on territory he had occupied uninterruptedly since 1914.

Sir Douglas Haig thus explains the design:—"As soon as the progress of the Third Army had forced the enemy to fall back from the Mercatel spur, thereby giving us a secure southern flank for an assault upon the German positions on Orange Hill and about Monchy-le-Preux, the moment arrived for the First Army to extend the front of our attack to the north. Using the river Sensee to cover their left, in the same way as the River Somme had been used to cover the left of the Fourth Army in the Battle of Amiens, the right of the First Army attacked east of Arras, and by turning from the north the western extremity of the Hindenburg Line compelled the enemy to undertake a further retreat. It was calculated correctly that this gradual extension of our front of attack would mislead the enemy as to where the main blow would fall, and would cause him to throw in his reserves piecemeal."

As we shall see, the entire operation was entrusted to the Canadian Corps, strengthened at times by the addition of British Divisions. The recommendation of the Canadian Corps Commander made after the successful initial operations of the Battle of Amiens, namely, that those operations should be slackened to give time to organize a set piece attack on a broad front in a surprise attack elsewhere, had therefore borne its full fruit.

In this connection it is interesting to follow Sir Arthur Currie's observations upon the general situation at this date. "In sympathy with the severe reverses suffered on the Marne," he says, "and consequent upon the actions now fully developed in the Somme salient, signs were not wanting that the enemy was preparing to evacuate the salient of the Lys. This evacuation began under pressure of the First Army on Aug. 25.

"All these attacks and results, direct or indirect, enabled the Allies to recover the ground they had lost in the course of the German offensive operations (of the spring and summer). The recapture of the ground was, however, of secondary importance as compared to the moral results of these successive victories. The German Armies had been impressed in the course of these operations by the superiority of our generalship and of our organization, and by the great determination of our troops and subordinate commanders.

"The Hindenburg System, however, was intact, and the enemy Higher Command hoped and believed that behind this powerfully organized area the German Armies might be collected and reorganized. Fighting the most determined rearguard action in the Somme salient, they expected that our armies would be tired and depleted by the time they reached the forward area of the Hindenburg System.

"The Battle of Cambrai, now about to be begun, shattered their hopes. By breaking through the Drocourt-Queant Line, itself but a part of the Hindenburg System, the Canadian Corps carried the operations forward to ground that had been in the hands of the Germans since 1914. This advance con-

stituted a direct threat on the rear of the German Armies north and south of Cambrai.

"Dominated at all times, paralysed by the swift and bold strokes on vital points of their line and by the relentless pressure applied everywhere, the German Higher Command was unable to take adequate steps to localize and stop our advance. After the Drocourt-Queant Line was broken, the retreat of the enemy became more accelerated, and our attacks met everywhere with less and less organized and determined resistance. The moral effect of the most bitter and relentless fighting which led to the capture of Cambrai was tremendous. The Germans had at last learned and understood that they were beaten."

The operations now about to open, and which were not concluded until the fall of Cambrai on Oct. 9, regarded as one great battle, ranks foremost in all the operations of the "Hundred Days." It entailed six weeks' continuous fighting, often surpassing in intensity any battle in which Canadian troops had ever been engaged, and never falling below the standard of bitterest trench warfare; for when, as in mid-September, there was a pause in the forward movement, our troops in the front line were exposed in a sharp salient and had no rest by day or night. Throughout this great battle the Canadian Corps held the centre of the field, and was often dependent entirely upon its own exertions and resources. Its work contributed more than any other combined operation of this period to the final downfall of the enemy arms. These are considerable claims but they will be amply supported by the ensuing narrative.

The task before the Canadian Corps is described by Sir Arthur Currie as follows:—"On Aug. 22 I received the details of the operation contemplated on the First Army Front. The plan was substantially as follows:—

"The Canadian Corps, on the right of the First Army, was to attack eastwards astride the Arras-Cambrai road, and by forcing its way through the Drocourt-Queant Line south of

the Scarpe to break the hinge of the Hindenburg System and prevent the possibility of the enemy rallying behind this powerfully organized defended area.

"These operations were to be carried out in conjunction with the operation of the Third Army then in progress. This attack had been fixed for next Sunday, Aug. 25. It was represented that this gave barely 48 hours to concentrate the necessary artillery, part of which was still in the Fourth Army area, and that, furthermore, the Canadian Corps had sentimental objections to attacking on the Sabbath Day. It was then agreed the attack should take place on Monday, Aug. 26.

"On the evening of Aug. 22 I held a conference of Divisional Commanders at Corps Headquarters (Hautecloque) and outlined the projected operation and my plans for carrying it out.

"In addition to a detailed knowledge of the ground, which we had held before, we were particularly benefited by all the reconnaissances and plans made for the capture of Orange Hill during the period of simulated activity at the end of July. The excellence of trench railways, rear communications, and administrative arrangements in the area were also of great value, and enabled the Canadian Corps to undertake to begin, with only three days' notice, the hardest battle in its history.

"Reinforcements had come up, and although all units were not up to strength, they were all in fighting condition. The efficiency of the organization peculiar to the Canadian Corps, and the soundness of the tactical doctrine practised, had been proved and confirmed.

"Flushed with the great victory they had just won, and fortified by the experience acquired, all ranks were ready for the coming task."

The first step must be the recapture of the territory overrun by the enemy in his spring offensive. The most important feature was the conical hill rising out of the plateau between the Scarpe and the Cambrai road known as Monchy-le-Preux. This had been captured from the enemy by a very fine opera-

tion of British troops who in April, 1917, had turned the position in a driving snowstorm as part of the programme carried out south of the Scarpe immediately following the capture of Vimy Ridge by the Canadian Corps.

In the face of furious counter-attacks lasting several days the hill had then been held by the gallant Newfoundland Regiment, who although cut to pieces clung desperately to the position until support was forthcoming. It was one of the tragedies of the spring of 1918 that Monchy-le-Preux was perhaps needlessly surrendered to the enemy. Those were days of panic and the loss of the hill seriously embarrassed the troops, including the 2nd. Canadian Division, holding the line in front of Arras during the summer. It was certain that the enemy would not give it up again without a desperate struggle.

There were other strong features, for the ground to be attacked lent itself peculiarly to defense, being composed of a succession of ridges, rivers and canals, which formed natural lines of defense of very great strength. These natural positions, often mutually supporting, had been abundantly fortified. Their organization was the last word in military engineering, and represented years of intensive and systematic labor. Barbed wire entanglements were formidable, machine-gun positions innumerable, and large tunnels had been provided for the protection of the garrison.

"The four main systems of defense," says the Corps Commander, "consisted of the following lines:—

1. The old German front line system east of Monchy-le-Preux.
2. The Fresnes-Rouvroy line.
3. The Drocourt-Queant line.
4. The Canal du Nord line.

"These, with their subsidiary switches and strong points, as well as the less organized but by no means weak intermediate lines of trenches, made the series of positions to be attacked without doubt one of the strongest defensively on the Western Front.

"Broad glacis, studded with machine-gun nests, defended the immediate approaches to these lines, and this necessitated in each case heavy fighting to gain a suitable jumping-off line before assaulting the main position.

"In addition to these systems, and as a preliminary to the attack on the old German trench system east of Monchy-le-Preux, it was necessary to capture the very well organized British defenses which had been lost in the fighting of March, 1918. These defenses were intact to a depth of about 5,500 yards, and were dominated by the heights of Monchy-le-Preux, from which the Germans were enjoying superior observation.

"Throughout these operations there could not be any element of surprise, other than that afforded by the selection of the actual hour of the assaults. The positions to be attacked formed the pivot of the movements of the German Army to the south, and the security of the Armies to the north depended also on these positions being retained. There was consequently little doubt that the enemy was alert, and had made every disposition to repulse the expected attacks. Therefore the plan necessitated provision for very hard and continuous fighting, the main stress being laid on the continuity of the operations.

"To carry this out, I decided to do the fighting with two Divisions in the line, each on a one-brigade front, thus enabling both divisions to carry on the battle for three successive days; the two other Divisions were to be kept in Corps Reserve, resting and refitting after each relief. (The severity of the fighting did not, however, allow this plan to be adhered to, and on many occasions the Divisions had to fight with two brigades in the front line.) It was understood that British Divisions from Army Reserve would be made available as soon as additional troops were required.

"To maintain the utmost vigor throughout the operation, the Divisions were directed to keep their support and reserve brigades close up, ready to push on as soon as the leading troops were expended."

Six terrible weeks were to follow. They were to test the

Corps as it had never been tested before. Days were to come in which it was to envisage defeat and triumph only by its stern denial of such a possibility.

For all it was to be a fiery ordeal; but for none more than the Corps Commander. He had taken on the task and for the honor of the Corps, of Canada, and the good of the cause, he must push it through to a victorious conclusion. Be sure there were for him days of doubt and sorrow. But his lofty spirit, certain of itself even as it was certain of the Canadian soldier, triumphed over all. Some few in intimate touch with the Corps Commander in the dark days may have guessed at a burden that at times was almost overwhelming, of responsibilities that troubled the humane man; but to those who relied upon him he showed only a serene fortitude, and quickened their drooping spirits by the vitality of his faith.

One of his Divisional Commanders has written of "the grateful thanks of all ranks of the Division to our chief, Sir Arthur Currie, for the extraordinary skill and ability with which he conducted these battles. And especially do we wish to place on record our appreciation of the care and solicitude which he has evinced at all times for our lives and general well-being."

CHAPTER II

WAYSIDE SCENES

MEANTIME preparations are going busily on. On the night of Aug. 19 the 2nd. Canadian Division began to move back to its fighting-ground in front of Arras, where it had arrived on March 30 in time to halt the enemy assault on Arras, remaining in the same line with a brief interval until the move south was made. Units of this division now found themselves back in the identical trenches they had held so many weeks.

The 3rd. Canadian Division began its move the following night and was followed immediately by the 1st. Division. But our 4th. Division remained in the line in front of Roye until Aug. 25, when it was relieved by the 34th. and 35th. French Divisions, and did not rejoin the Corps until Aug. 28, after the battle had opened.

The Canadian troops had been fighting in a country relatively little war-scarred, where green fields and growing things were to be seen; they had had the luck of an unbroken spell of fine weather; granted the hard toil and ever present danger of the soldier's lot, their excursion south had been something in the nature of a break in the dull monotony of trench warfare, an adventure full of life and color and movement.

Now they were coming back to No Man's Land, to the pitiless desolation wrought by the static warfare of years, to mud and wire and the clang of the gas alarm. Such was to be their life until long weeks ahead they had passed over the Canal du Nord, through the scarred wood of Bourlon, and had fought their way again to green fields across the Scheldt Canal.

But not the hardiest optimist nor the most imaginative soldier in their ranks could at that time guess that anything

lay in front of them but another winter in the trenches. Passing in trains and busses through August harvest scenes, their eyes were blinded to the great panorama presently to unroll before them—the towers of Valenciennes, the slag-heaps of Hainault, the belfry of Mons, the dark forests of the Ardennes and the shining ribbon of the Rhine. They had had their little excursion, their adventure, their holiday, and now, somewhat grimly, they returned to a landscape rent by war from the very form of nature, and to the dreary round of raid by night and alarums by day.

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We are camped in the orchard of Noyelle Vion, ten miles west of Arras. It is unscourged by war and its people go about their daily avocations, habituated to the continual shifting military population. We follow hard on an American divisional staff—their footprints are still fresh in the damp orchard mould—and they in turn some British troops. The tradition of French Units there in the early months of the war is already indistinct. English is the language of barter and children lisp it.

One wonders whether this movement is welcome to the peasants. The idea of being their saviors has passed into history; we must be something of a nuisance. True, they are paid for their billets; but in turn they must evacuate their homes or crowd into narrow quarters. Home life ceased for these peasants four years ago. They are the mere appendage of a vast and complex military movement, restless, seeming purposeless, that at an hour's notice picks up the major population of the village, whisks it from sight and memory (save perhaps in a shy maiden heart), and before nightfall deposits a new, strange, but still alien multitude in khaki.

Shops, houses, estaminets, have sunk their identity in the bold conspicuous numbering of the billets. The maiden sisters Dubuc, whose little dress-making parlor stood just back from the street and was a favorite corner for gossip among the good wives, have disappeared, God knows where. Peace will bring

them back, but the gate that looked down the cobbled street as they plied their busy needle is now disfigured by the sign, "No. 37—billets for 18 men."

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Mankind has the instinct to climb upward, survey what lies below of the countryside, and catch maybe the sun's declining rays. Back of the orchard gently rising ground leads one up to one of the finest prospects in France; not bold indeed, like the view from Cassel, but on every hand undulating into purple distances.

Peace here reigns. In the foreground women with kilted skirts are milking. An old man steadily follows his plow. Up the road, perched sideways on a farm horse, her sabots clicking against the chain traces, rides a young girl, a white kerchief bound coquettishly over her dark hair; going home to prepare the evening meal. At the hour of vespers for countless generations these same people have been doing these same tasks. The war has not touched them visibly, save that it has snatched from the village sturdy manhood and lusty youth.

Below lies a vista of dark plowed land, yellowing fields of sugar beet, tender green of sprouting grain, and umbrageous clumps enclosing trim villages. Nothing could be more sylvan, more caressing to the eye. But at our very feet is a line of trench, leaving its white serrated scar, hastily thrown up in those feverish spring days when it seemed Arras too must fall in the general ruin.

What is that mass that gleams on the eastern skyline? The glass shows the familiar lines of the broken towers of the great church of Mont St. Eloi, a landmark for miles around, to be seen at a later date quite as distinctly from the hilltop of Monchy-le-Preux.

And then that faint outline must be Vimy Ridge with its crowding memories. To the left stand out the wooded summits bordering Notre Dame de Lorette. War is not so distant. From an aerodrome in the valley rises a solitary airman and awhile he disports himself in the blue. Soon the sharp

purr of his engine is overhead. He turns, careening his machine, whose belly gleams ruddy in the blazing western sky, a darting dragon-fly. Presently he is joined by the rest of his bombing squadron. In perfect alignment, like flight of geese over northern lake, they turn eastward on their grim errand.

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In the little town of Duisans but a stone's throw west of Arras a procession of clergy and pious laymen bearing banners and tall candles pass up the hill to the church. This is a day of thanksgiving for the villagers. The legend goes that in those fateful days of August, 1914, when the Hun swept through Arras into the country beyond, the aged Curé called together the devout and earnestly they besought Our Lady that if She would shield them from the invader, annual offerings would be made at the shrine. A party of Uhlans rode up to the town octroi post, enquired if troops were there, and then returned whence they came. Shells fell about the outskirts, neighboring villages were shattered, but not a pagan finger-mark touched Duisans. Worn out with the load of the terrible years the old priest died, but still the parish pays its annual tribute. Presently are heard strains of Gregorian music.

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In our orchard is much speculation as to when and where the Corps will go in again. It rains a good deal, the ground is clayey, and rash folk say any move will be to the good.

It is Sunday night, Aug. 25, "Heine" has been over, and one of our fellows after him. An officer with a night glass claims he saw him come down. An orderly comes to the tent with an urgent message. . . In a few minutes we are pulling boots on again and going down the hill to the Corps garage.

It is after midnight; the attack is to be at three o'clock; there is little time to spare. Soon Noyelle Vion is behind us and we pass through Habarcq, famous, we have been told, for its beautiful women. Presently we come out upon the broad St. Pol-Arras highway; and broad it need be to take care of the traffic this night. No lights are allowed, for all this road is

under direct observation; the moon, just past the full, keeps slipping behind clouds, and we crawl forward slowly. We pass gun-limbers pulled by six horses apiece, whose black feet make a pattern on the wet shining road. Dense columns of four swing steadily forward—the identification patch is French grey, and therefore the 3rd. Canadian Division, but we can make out nothing further.

No stretch of the imagination can render Arras beautiful; but there is a certain picturesqueness in the narrow streets exposing to the night their gaping wounds. It is a tortuous passage, and just where traffic space is most needed, a wall of sand-bags has been built across the street. Past the ruined railway station we go; across a bridge and then up a long hill; through ruins that once were the Faubourg Ronville and so into other ruins that once was the village of Beaurains. In a dug-out here is a Company Headquarters, where men going up the line are being served hot tea, grateful and refreshing.

The car can go no further, but it is only a matter of a mile to Telegraph Hill, which offers a good view of the battle. It has begun to rain—a driving rain from the west, cold and cheerless—and it is slow work picking one's way through wire and trenches, stumbling over a soldier's grave or slipping into a shell hole. "Zero" hour, in fact, bursts on our ear from a field-battery unnoticed in a little wood a few yards behind us. The battle is on, but nothing can be made out in the darkness. The barrage we have been told is more intense than that even of the opening of the Amiens show, but somehow it is not so impressive. The front is narrower, and the horizon limited by ridges; there is not the same wide sweep of vision that made the spectacle from Gentelles ever memorable.

Nevertheless it is effective, as the enemy's flares show. Very soon there is the glimmer of dawn and gradually the battlefield unfolds, as through a transparency. Getting back to the road that runs from Beaurains to Neuville Vitasse, we meet already some of our walking wounded. One of these drives before him thirty prisoners. "They expected us today," he calls out, "but

we were an hour too early for them. These lazy beggars were asleep in their dug-out. How is the battle going? Why, fine; we're away over the hill by now." But he adds that the machine-gunners are stout chaps and gave it his section bad.

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Over the entrance to a dug-out is a boldly painted sign: "THIS IS NEUVILLE VITASSE." That ruin needed identification. Our 31st. Battalion, Southern Alberta, had captured part of the village—or the trench system that goes under that name—but the previous night, and fighting was still going on in the other end. Further to the right we now see our men, a straggling line, making good progress a mile or so inside the enemy line.

But the enemy is shelling the sunken road going through the village and one is well advised to take to a trench. In fact it is a very different affair to Amiens, where our men sailed off into the blue and were not brought up until they had got in four or five miles. Our counter-battery work then silenced his guns, but now he is putting up a fight for every yard of ground and sending over big stuff on our support lines. Against the skyline a tank lies derelict, and our line, now very thin, is scattered into little groups, answering the enemy machine-gun fire. Slowly troops in support work forward.

An Advanced Dressing Station is busy in the fold of the hill just behind Neuville Vitasse. Long lines of our wounded wait patiently, lying in the open on stretchers. Nearby is a Brigade Headquarters. News that men of the 3rd. Division have captured Monchy-le-Preux evokes a cheer. "Good old C. M. Rs.," whispers a private of the 31st. One wonders if he can make blighty—his face is the color of parchment—but he lies there, waiting his turn, without complaint. A big fellow in field-gray next him groans horribly.

Down the shell-torn road come long lines of stretcher-bearers. One of these little parties is scattered by a bursting charge. The surgeons in their white aprons work on impassively.

CHAPTER III

OPERATIONS: AUG. 26-27

THE attack on the morning of Aug. 26 was to be launched by the 2nd. Canadian Division, Maj.-General Sir Henry E. Burstall, on the right and the 3rd. Canadian Division, Maj.-General L. J. Lipsett, on the left, with a total frontage of 6,000 yards. The jumping-off line began at the Sugar Factory, just south of Neuville Vitasse, passing north through that village, then a little east of Telegraph Hill, across the Arras-Cambrai road (the Divisional boundary) just east of Tilloy-lez-Mofflaines, thence northeast to the Scarpe river at Fampoux, north of which the line was taken up by the 51st. Division, for the purpose of this operation placed under orders of the Canadian Corps Commander. This famous Highland Division, as part of the XXII Corps, had been through all the hard fighting on the Marne in July, and had good reason to be a little battle weary. To protect the flank of our 3rd. Division the 51st. Division was to advance towards Mount Pleasant and Roeux.

On our right the XVII Corps, the left Corps of the Third Army, during the offensive of the preceding week had advanced its line well forward of our right flank to the outskirts of Croisilles, whence its front trended back northwesterly to join up with us at Neuville Vitasse. This Corps was to follow up any advantage the Canadian Corps might gain.

On the previous night, Saturday, Aug. 24, our 2nd. Division had secured a better jumping-off line by advancing its outposts into the western edge of Neuville Vitasse, pursuing this advantage by capturing the Sugar Factory and some elements of trenches south of the village.

The original design was that our two Divisions should push their attack due east, but after the battle was initiated this was changed, the Cambrai road being made the Divisional bound-

ary line, the direction being southeast. The first task set for the 2nd. Division was the capture of Chapel Hill, and it was then to work south through the old British support system and join up with troops of the XVII Corps on the right on the northern end of Wancourt Spur, the object being to throw a drag-net round the enemy troops in their forward area towards Neuville Vitasse. The left of the Division was to push forward simultaneously and capture the southern end of Monchy-le-Preux. The 3rd. Division was to capture Orange Hill first and then pass on to the attack on Monchy-le-Preux. Both Divisions were to exploit their success as far as possible.

"After mature consideration, 'zero' hour, which had been originally set at 4.50 a.m. was changed to 3 a.m.," says Sir Arthur Currie, "in order to take advantage of the restricted visibility produced by moonlight and so to effect a surprise; the attacking troops would thus pass through the enemy's forward machine-gun defenses by infiltration, and be in position to assault at dawn his line of resistance on the eastern slopes of Orange Hill.

"The initial assault was to be supported by 17 Brigades of Field and nine Brigades of Heavy Artillery. (Throughout the Arras-Cambrai operations the Artillery allotted to the Canadian Corps was at all times adequate, varying at times in accordance with the tasks assigned. In the operation against the Drocourt-Queant line the attack was supported by 20 Brigades of Field and 12 Brigades of Heavy Artillery.)

"The following Troops were attached to the Canadian Corps for the operations:—

"5th. Squadron, R. A. F.

"3rd. Brigade, Tank Corps (about 45 tanks to a Brigade).

"As a result of lessons learned during the Amiens operations, it was laid down, as a general principle, that Tanks should follow rather than precede the Infantry. The 3rd. Tank Brigade was asked to supply, if possible, nine Tanks to each attacking Division each day, and the necessity of exercising the greatest economy in their employment was impressed on Divisional Commanders.

"On Aug. 26, at 3 a.m., the attack was launched under the usual artillery and machine-gun barrages. It made good progress, the village of Monchy-le-Preux being entered early in the day, after a very brilliant encircling attack carried out by the 8th. Brigade (Brig.-General D. C. Draper). The trenches immediately to the east of Monchy-le-Preux were found to be heavily held, and were not cleared until about 11 a.m. by the 7th. Brigade (Brig.-General H. M. Dyer).

"Guemappe was captured at 4 p.m. and Wancourt Tower and the top of Heninel Ridge were in our hands at 10.40 p.m. The defenders of the latter feature fought hard, but eventually succumbed to a determined attack delivered by the 6th. Brigade (Brig.-General A. H. Bell), under cover of an extemporized barrage fired by the 2nd. Canadian Divisional Artillery (Brig.-General H. A. Panet). During the night this Brigade captured in addition Egret Trench, thus securing a good jumping-off line for the operation of the following day.

"The situation along the Arras-Cambrai road was at one time obscure, following a change in the Inter-Divisional boundary ordered when the attack was in progress. A gap occurred for a few hours, but it was filled as soon as discovered by the Canadian Independent Force.

"The enemy fought strenuously and several counter-attacks were repulsed at various stages of the fighting, three German Divisions being identified during the day and more than 2,000 prisoners captured together with a few guns and many machine-guns.

"North of the Scarpe the 51st. (Highland) Division had pushed forward east of the Chemical Works and Gavrelle without meeting serious opposition."

Our average advance the first day was thus about 6,000 yards, converting what had been the sharp enemy salient thrust to within two miles of Arras into a fairly uniform line projected forward by our two Divisions—on our right to within a thousand or fifteen hundred yards of the old German front line; and on our left, south of the Scarpe at Pelves, actually a

little over that line, thus giving us virgin territory he had held since 1914. It was an auspicious beginning.

On our right the XVII Corps, after some delay, had conformed to our advance through Heninel. But on our left, north of the Scarpe, the situation was not quite so satisfactory; for the 51st. Division had orders to co-operate but not to attack, and during the day did not advance more than a thousand yards on the river, thus being at least as much behind our men who had established themselves in the western outskirts of Pelves.

Although the task of our 2nd. Division was not so spectacular as the work allotted to the 3rd. Division on their left, it was far from easy. The enemy, alert to meet attacks already developing in this sector, had pushed forward reinforcements. Our advance developed well along the Cambrai road, but when our troops sought by a turning movement to link up with the XVII Corps, the fighting became very severe, each ridge providing a separate battlefield, and already the enemy was showing what lay in store for us when his main line of resistance was reached.

On the right, the 6th. Brigade, Brig.-General A. H. Bell, attacked with the 29th. Battalion, of Vancouver, on the Brigade right, and the 27th. Battalion, of Winnipeg, on its left. These battalions pushed forward due east on each side of Neuville Vitasse, the 27th. swinging round and closing in on the back of the village, and then continued the advance to Wancourt village, which was taken on schedule. Meantime the 29th. Battalion had swung off at right angles in an endeavor to secure contact with troops of the Third Army. This difficult manœuvre was well carried out, a number of prisoners and guns being captured in Neuville Vitasse.

Advancing to capture Wancourt Ridge, both battalions were held up by terrific machine-gun fire, and proceeded to make good a line of defense. The 31st. Battalion, Southern Alberta, and the 28th. Battalion, Regina, now came up in support, and with aid of an admirable shoot put on by the 2nd.

Divisional Artillery, the ridge was finally cleared and Wancourt Tower captured at half past four the same afternoon. That night the Brigade pushed forward and captured a line of trench ahead to furnish the 5th. Brigade with a good jumping-off line next morning. The right battalion of the Brigade was obliged to build up a flank to the south, as the British troops had not come up.

Meantime the 4th. Brigade, Brig.-General R. Rennie, on the left of the 6th. Brigade, after storming Chapel Hill, had pushed on south of the Cambrai road, with Brutinel's Brigade now on their left, overcoming heavy opposition at Guemappe and along the swampy valley of the Cojeul. The 4th. Brigade attacked at 3.20 a.m. and by 6 a.m. had reached its first objective, the 21st. Battalion, Eastern Ontario, on the right, and the 20th. Battalion, Central Ontario, on the left. The final objective was reached at 7.30 a.m. with Guemappe captured later by the 21st. Battalion. The 19th. Battalion, Central Ontario, and the 18th. Battalion, Western Ontario, now came up in support and by seven in the evening the line had been carried forward to the northern slope of the Heninel Ridge.

On our left, on the 3rd. Canadian Division front, the dramatic feature of the day was the capture of Monchy-le-Preux, the commanding height known to every soldier on the Arras front, and this brilliant exploit is deserving of description in some detail. The attack was entrusted to the 8th. Brigade, (Brig.-General D. C. Draper). At "zero" our artillery put down a heavy rolling barrage, moving forward at the rate of a hundred yards every four minutes, on the enemy's front line and defenses, in conjunction with defensive barrages designed to prevent the enemy bringing up reinforcements. The 5th., 4th., and 2nd. C. M. R. Battalions jumped off exactly at "zero," following closely upon the rolling barrage. At twenty-five minutes past five, when visibility was good, the 1st. C. M. R. Battalion, Western Manitoba and Saskatchewan, passed through the 4th. and 2nd. C. M. R. Battalions on our

left, attacking the enemy positions between the Scarpe river and the northern slopes of Monchy-le-Preux. The attack was pressed with vigor, and by seven o'clock our men had accomplished their tasks and the final objectives were in their hands, but they did not stop until they had advanced some distance further east. The right flank swung round behind Monchy-le-Preux, joining hands at eight o'clock with the 5th. C. M. R., Eastern Townships, which had attacked on the right, capturing Orange Hill and then drifting parties up to the southwest of the village. Seeing themselves thus cut off from support, the garrison surrendered.

During the advance our troops encountered and overcame stiff resistance, chiefly machine-gun fire and particularly from the village. No sooner were they in possession of the hill than the enemy turned upon it a furious bombardment, with trench mortars and heavy guns. At eleven o'clock, units of the 7th. Brigade passed through the line and pressed on the advance, leaving the 8th. Brigade to consolidate the position they had so gallantly won.

In this brilliant encircling movement the 1st. C. M. R. inflicted severe casualties on the enemy besides capturing a large number of prisoners. Several heavy and light trench-mortars, a great number of heavy and light machine-guns, together with two 77mm. guns, fell into their hands.

There remains to be recorded a notable personal exploit. After the encircling movement was completed but while the enemy still held the hill crowned with the ruins of Monchy-le-Preux, Lieut. Charles Smith Rutherford, 5th. C. M. R., a native of Colborne, Ont., went forward alone to reconnoitre, some distance ahead of his assaulting party. Entering the outskirts of the village he walked straight into an enemy machine-gun section, holding a pill-box, but which was not looking for an attack from that quarter. "Surrender," he cried without a moment's hesitation, though covered by enemy rifles. "You are completely surrounded and our machine-gunners will open fire on you if you do not surrender immediately." The enemy

officer disputed the fact and invited Rutherford to enter the pill-box, but this he discreetly declined. There was a moment's discussion and then the German officer said they would surrender. "You have another machine-gun further up the hill; order them to surrender or we'll blow them to bits." And they did; the entire garrison, consisting of two officers and 43 men with three machine-guns, surrendered to him.

His men then coming up, Lieut. Rutherford observed that the right assaulting party was held up by heavy machine-gun fire from another pill-box. This he attacked with a Lewis-gun section and captured a further 35 prisoners with machine-guns, thus enabling the party to continue their advance.

Orange hill, west of Monchy-le-Preux, was covered by a strong enemy trench line, and some of the numerous dug-outs were not mopped-up thoroughly as our infantry pushed ahead. Father James Nicholson of Kingston, Ont., chaplain of the 5th. C. M. R., went over with his Medical Officer and stretcher-bearers after the infantry. Coming to a dug-out, the Padre shouted down. "Don't shoot," cried a Boche officer; "we surrender." And up tumbled seven officers and 40 men, piling their arms. "But where are your men?" asked the leader, looking round suspiciously. "Never mind; prepare to go to the rear." They began to whisper together. At this moment the M. O. arrived with his stretcher-bearers, but all unarmed. "That is quite enough from you; one word more and off goes your block," he said walking up to the Boche. Fortunately at that juncture two of our men with rifles came up. "Shoot the first man that opens his mouth," said the M. O., Capt. H. B. McEwan, and they marched off to the rear.

After passing through the 8th. Brigade, the 7th. Brigade had very stiff fighting along the valley of the Scarpe and also towards the Bois du Vert and the Bois du Sart, from which the enemy launched heavy counter-attacks during the course of that afternoon and evening. But these were beaten off and our line consolidated for the attack next morning.

"The attack," says the Corps Commander, "was renewed

at 4.55 a.m. on Aug. 27 by the 2nd. and 3rd. Canadian Divisions, in the face of increased opposition, under a uniformly good initial barrage.

"The 2nd. Canadian Division pushed doggedly forward through the old German trench system, where very stiff hand-to-hand fighting took place, and crossed the Sensee river, after capturing the villages of Cherisy and Vis-en-Artois.

"The 3rd. Canadian Division encountered very heavy opposition, but succeeded in capturing Bois du Vert, Bois du Sart, and reaching the western outskirts of Haucourt, Remy, Boiry-Notre-Dame and Pelves.

"The enemy throughout the day pushed a large number of reinforcements forward, bringing up Machine-gun Units in motor lorries in the face of our accurate Field and Artillery Fire. Hostile Field Batteries in the open, firing over open sights, showed remarkable tenacity, several remaining in action until the personnel had been destroyed by our machine-gun fire.

"Our casualties were heavy, especially on the 2nd. Canadian Division front, and after discussing the situation with the G. O. C., 2nd. Canadian Division, and taking into consideration the uncertainty of the right flank of this Division, the operations were, after 5.45 p.m., restricted to the consolidation of the line then reached east of the Sensee river.

"North of the Scarpe, the 51st. (Highland) Division had pushed forward and gained a footing on Greenland Hill, but were forced to withdraw slightly by a heavy German counter-attack. During the night of Aug. 27-28 the 8th. Division (VII Corps) took over the northern half of the 51st. Division front.

"As the enemy was still holding Plouvain and the high ground north of the Scarpe, the 3rd. Canadian Division had been compelled to refuse its left flank, and the front now held by this Division was increased from about 3,700 yards to about 6,000 yards."

The fact was that while during this day the Canadian Corps advanced a maximum of about 4,000 yards along the

Cambrai road, there was no corresponding advance by the British troops on either flank, particularly on the north, where the failure to hold Greenland Hill was a sad loss, as enemy batteries on this elevation directed at us an enfilade fire throughout this and the following days.

This situation was very clear to the onlooker on top of Monchy-le-Preux, at times itself a warm spot. The main supply of ammunition for both our Divisions was along the Arras-Cambrai road, and this was subjected to a harassing fire along its entire length. Several ammunition lorries were hit south of Monchy, and casualties were suffered by our Advanced Dressing Station in that vicinity, all the fire coming from the north right across the supports of our 3rd. Division.

On our right the 2nd. Canadian Division had a hard day of it right from the kick-off. The attack was made by the 5th. Brigade on the right, which during the night had relieved the 6th. Brigade; and the 4th. Brigade on the left, immediately south of the Arras-Cambrai road.

The 5th. Brigade had a terrible gruelling, fighting its way through a dense maze of trenches and wire, and with its right flank in the air. All its battalions were engaged and lost very heavily, these being the 24th., recruited from the Victoria Rifles of Montreal, the 22nd., French Canadians, the 25th., Nova Scotia, and 26th., New Brunswick.

Lt.-Col. W. H. Clark-Kennedy of the 24th., enlisted at Montreal, showed this day conspicuous bravery and brilliant leadership. He led his Battalion with great bravery and skill from Crow and Aigrette trenches in front of Wancourt to the attack on the Fresnes-Rouvroy line. From the outset the 5th. Brigade, of which the 24th. was a central unit, came under very heavy shell and machine-gun fire, suffering many casualties, especially among the leaders. Units became partially disorganized and the advance was checked. Appreciating the vital importance to the Brigade front of a lead by the centre and undismayed by annihilating fire, Lt.-Col. Clark-Kennedy, by sheer personality and initiative, inspired his men and en-

couraged them forward. On several occasions he led parties straight at the machine-gun nests, which were holding up the advance. By controlling the direction of neighboring units and collecting men who had lost their leaders, he rendered valuable services in strengthening the line, and enabled the whole Brigade front to move forward.

By the afternoon, very largely due to the determined leadership of this officer and disregard for his own life, his Battalion, despite its heavy losses, had made good the maze of trenches west of Cherisy and Cherisy village, had crossed the Sensee bed, and had occupied the Occident trench in front of the heavy wire of the Fresnes-Rouvroy line. Under continuous fire he then went up and down his line until far into the night, improving the position, giving wonderful encouragement to his men, and sending back very clear reports.

On the left of the 2nd. Canadian Division front the 4th. Brigade had equally hard fighting. It captured Vis-en-Artois, on the Arras-Cambrai road, early but was unable to cross the Sensee river until late in the day. Undeterred by their losses these fine Ontario Units fought their way literally step by step until they had made good the east bank of the Sensee. The fighting was very bitter in character, and the 21st. Battalion in particular was little inclined to mercy after a Boche prisoner had shot down one of their officers.

From Monchy it was clear that a stern battle was in progress up over the high ridge from Wancourt and Guemappe and then down into the valley of the Sensee river, through the strongly fortified villages of Cherisy and Vis-en-Artois. From the opposite slope the enemy poured in a terrific fire, and from time to time he threw in counter-attacks with his infantry. It was slow and expensive work, but it was vitally necessary to unmask the Fresnes-Rouvroy line, the last line of resistance which lay between us and our immediate goal, the Drocourt-Queant Switch, itself an integral part of the Hindenburg system.

Equally intense but of a different character was the fighting

on the front of the 3rd. Division on our left. We were now fighting in the No Man's Land of 1917 and the ground was everywhere torn up by shell fire and littered with old wire. The 7th. Brigade had carried the line overnight in front of the Bois du Vert and Bois du Sart, two woods crowning twin heights a thousand yards apart north and south, Monchy being two thousand yards west. A thousand yards northeast of Bois du Sart lies Jigsaw Wood, with Hatchett Wood between.

The 9th. Brigade took up the attack at zero hour, the immediate objective being these two woods, and if possible the advance was to be pushed on into Boiry-Notre-Dame, a mile further east. The two woods were taken in the first rush, but the enemy meanwhile had brought down heavy reinforcements from Douai and counter-attacked three times in succession from Jigsaw Wood, compelling us to refuse our left, which here, as already explained, exposed a long flank to the north.

In order to cope with the resistance, it was determined to lay down a hurricane barrage on Jigsaw Wood, and for this purpose four Brigades of Field Artillery and a dozen batteries of heavy guns were concentrated on Orange Hill and opened fire simultaneously. As luck would have it, the enemy had just pushed in strong supports to their troops holding Jigsaw Wood, and the slaughter was very great. Our bombing 'planes, flying over the wood at the same time, added to the destruction and confusion.

The enemy, however, had a strong second line of defense and both Boiry and Jigsaw Wood remained in his hands this day. On its right however, the 3rd. Canadian Division succeeded in advancing its line north of the Cambrai road abreast of our 2nd. Division at Vis-en-Artois. The battle was intensifying as it progressed, but there was harder fighting yet to come.

CHAPTER IV

OPERATIONS: AUG. 28

"IT was intended," says Sir Arthur Currie, "to continue the battle on Aug. 28, with the 1st. Canadian Division on the right and the 4th. (British) Division, then coming under my command, on the left; the latter Division, however, was unable to reach the battle position in time. As it was undesirable at this stage to employ a fresh Division alongside a Division which had been already engaged, the orders issued were cancelled and the battle was continued by the Divisions then in the line."

In fact there was no choice in the matter. As we have seen, the 4th. Canadian Division was then only moving back from Amiens. The enemy was pushing up reinforcements from both Douai and Cambrai and evidently meant to throw every available ounce into the scale to check us before the Drocourt-Queant line was reached. He held an immensely strong position on the eastern slopes rising up from the Sensee river which was continued by the Boiry defense line to the Scarpe. He had shown a disposition to attack in force and the positions we had won offered no facilities for a passive defense. We must either go on or fall back on Wancourt Ridge and Monchy, thus throwing away the fruits of two days' hard fighting and all the advantages of our surprise attack. It was not to be thought of, and so until two fresh divisions could be brought into the line—the following night at earliest—there was nothing for it but for our tired troops to press on.

The day's operations are described by the Corps Commander as follows:—"At 9 a.m. on Aug. 28 the 3rd. Canadian Division resumed the attack, followed at 12.30 p.m. by the 2nd. Canadian Division. The objective for the day was the capture of the Fresnes-Rouvroy line, the possession of which was vital to the success of our further operations.

"On the left the 3rd. Canadian Division had pushed forward, capturing the Fresnes-Rouvroy line from the Sensee river to north of Boiry-Notre-Dame, and had secured that village, Jigsaw Wood and entered Pelves. They had, however, been unable to clear the village of Haucourt."

In order to shorten their front and reduce to a minimum the risk of a counter-attack from the north (the 51st. Division being still at Roeux), our 3rd. Division opened the day by an assault at seven o'clock on their extreme left, when by the capture of Pelves they secured that bridgehead over the Scarpe. This was brilliantly carried out by the 7th. Brigade, Brig.-General H. M. Dyer, whose elements fought their way through an intricate maze of trenches, despite the galling fire poured in on them from the heights bordering the river valley further east.

It was the scene of a very brilliant exploit. Sergt. John Hutchinson of the 49th Battalion, of Edmonton, a native of Newcastle, but who enlisted at Edmonton, led the way up an enemy communication trench, which projected forward at right angles from their main system. Bombing as he went, he fought along the trench to the T point where it joined the main trench, where he established himself and sent back word that the left of the enemy sector based on the river was now in the air. Reinforcements were rushed up and our men divided right and left, along the main trench, and soon were in complete possession.

Across the bare open ground from the east the enemy sent over three massed counter-attacks in order to restore their line, but our men turned on them their own trench-mortars, and the divisional artillery, being now apprised of the situation, laid down so effective a barrage that the enemy was cut to pieces, many dead being left on the field.

Combined with the operations of the 9th. Brigade, Brig.-General D. M. Ormond, on the divisional right, this movement had the effect of turning the flank of the very strong enemy position in Jigsaw Wood, which the previous day had

resisted all our efforts. The garrison streamed back from the wood across the open plateau and were mown down by the rifle fire of our men in the main trench, the range being so short that the shooting was exceedingly effective. Few of them reached their support line.

Further to the right, the 9th. Brigade pushed ahead, and the 52nd. Battalion, New Ontario, which the previous day had captured Bois du Vert, now stormed Boiry village. This was the battalion that had taken Damery in the Amiens show, but probably its work on this day will rank in its annals as a greater achievement, for the men had lost heavily on the previous day and expected relief that night. Yet they went in with a will and a cheer and nothing could stand before them. Since Aug. 8 the Battalion had lost over half its effectives.

On the night of Aug. 28-29 the 3rd. Canadian Division was relieved by the 4th. British Division and went out of the line for a brief rest, after three days' ding-dong fighting in which every Brigade was used to the uttermost, following close on the hard work along the Roye road in the Amiens show. But although not actually in the line, the general situation demanded they should remain in close support, where they were still exposed to enemy shell fire.

One of the most remarkable features of the present fighting, indeed, arose from the fact that the enemy immediately before us was in superior strength, as during the course of the battle between Aug. 26 and Sept. 2 he brought into action no less than eleven divisions, all of which were beaten in turn. Coupled with this the fact that at this stage we were but fighting our way up through the fringe of his defense in an effort to grapple with his main line of resistance, and it will be seen that the situation of our divisions in the line—weakened numerically by their heavy losses, incessantly straafed by the enemy's artillery and machine-gun fire, and subjected to successive waves of determined counter-attack from fresh troops thrown into his line—must have afforded constant anxiety to the Corps Commander.

It followed inevitably that an exhausted division, so far from going out to rest in a back area when relieved, must "stand to," close up in support, ready for any event, and thus be exposed to bombardment by day and bombing by night.

Curious indeed was the spectacle presented by every little vale and depression in this area that lay separated by but a single ridge from the battle line and the direct observation of the enemy, but which nevertheless was crowded with infantry in support, massed batteries of artillery, heavy and light, trains of supply and field ambulances; with cheek-by-jowl Divisional, Brigade and Battalion Headquarters, in dug-outs and under canvas.

Such an area was included south of the Cambrai road between Neuville Vitasse and Guemappe and from the commanding vantage of Monchy-le-Preux lay spread out like a map. It seemed impossible the enemy could fail to note this great concentration, where a division lay within the compass of a good-sized western ranch, and to pour down upon it a devastating bombardment. But his gunners were fully occupied in dealing with our assaults on his front area, and beyond throwing over occasional heavy stuff and maintaining a persistent searching fire along our lines of communication, there was nothing in the way of a concerted artillery demonstration. During these and the next few following days, too, our airmen had so established their supremacy that hostile scouts durst not venture over our lines in daylight. These conditions, however, brought about relatively heavy casualties among troops lying in support, and particularly among our burial parties.

The situation on our left, the 3rd. Division front, has been dealt with first because the kick-off took place in the early morning, while on the right, to which we now come, the 2nd. Canadian Division did not open its attack south of the Cambrai road until a little after noon.

"On the front of the 2nd. Canadian Division the fighting was most severe," says Sir Arthur Currie. "The wire in front of the Fresnes-Rouvroy line was found to be almost intact,

and although at some points the 5th. Brigade (Brig.-General T. L. Tremblay) had succeeded in penetrating the line, the first objective could not be secured, except one short length on the extreme right. Subjected to heavy machine-gun fire from both flanks as well as frontally, the attacking troops had suffered heavy casualties, which they had borne with the utmost fortitude.

"At nightfall the general line of the 2nd. Canadian Division was little in advance of the line held the night before, although a few parties of stubborn men were still as far forward as the wire of the Fresnes-Rouvroy line. Enemy reinforcements were seen dribbling forward all day long."

The 5th. Brigade staff had suffered severely in the Amiens show, when one shell had wounded Brig.-General Ross, and killed the Brigade Major and a Staff Major of the 2nd. Division present, besides wounding the Brigade Intelligence Officer. Lt.-Col. T. L. Tremblay, who had led the 22nd. Battalion with such distinction at Courcelette and elsewhere, was now Acting-Brigadier, later to be confirmed in that appointment. The Brigade, exhausted and depleted though it was by the hard fighting of the previous days, could not have been handled with more resolution, and the response of the men was magnificent, but they were up against an impossible task.

All the battalions engaged lost very heavily, the casualties of the Brigade during the two days' fighting being about one hundred officers and 2,500 other ranks. Every officer engaged of the 22nd. Battalion, French Canadians, was a casualty by nightfall of Aug. 28, including the Acting O. C., Major A. E. Dubuc, with the entire headquarters staff of the battalion, mostly by shell fire.

Lt.-Col. Clark-Kennedy, of the 24th. Battalion, whose brilliant leadership the preceding day has been recounted above, was seriously wounded. He again showed valorous leadership in the attack on the Fresnes-Rouvroy line and Upton Wood. Though severely wounded soon after the start, he refused aid,

and dragged himself to a shell hole, from which he could observe. Realising that his exhausted troops could advance no further he established a strong line of defense and thereby prevented the loss of most important ground. Despite intense pain and serious loss of blood he refused to be evacuated for over five hours, by which time he had established the line in a position from which it was possible for the relieving troops to continue the advance.

Lt.-Col. John Wyse of the 25th. Battalion, Nova Scotia, was wounded severely while leading his men, the command devolving upon Major F. P. Day, Lt.-Col. A. E. G. McKenzie, 26th Battalion, New Brunswick, was killed while gallantly rallying his men, and thus every unit of the 5th. Brigade lost its commanding officer, besides extremely heavy casualties both among officers and rank and file, losses to the 26th. being nine officers and 350 men.

"I never saw so many machine-guns in my life," said the Trench-Mortar Officer of the New Brunswickers after the battle. "They were in three tiers, three miles wide, protected by dense wire, their front plastered by shell fire. We attacked again and again and in the intervals beat off enemy counter-attacks. If we'd had tanks we'd have been all right. What we want is tanks, tanks and yet more tanks."

"It isn't rifles that shoot them guys," said a stretcher-bearer at the Advanced Dressing Station. "Pretty well every man that comes down here is done in by machine-guns. But most of them are good blighties, with clean bullet wounds."

A good idea of the character of the fighting throughout the day of Aug. 28 is given by the narrative of a soldier of the 22nd. Battalion, as told the following day. "On Monday," he said, "we were in support. Our total strength was about 850 of all ranks, but when fifty men had been detached as stretcher-bearers and burial parties, and a few men from each company left in reserve as a nucleus at Battalion Headquarters, our battle strength was reduced to 675.

"Ten o'clock Tuesday morning we moved up to the attack

between Guemappe and Cherisy, but were held up on the ridge and lost heavily, by machine-gun fire, as did the 20th. and 21st. of the 4th. Brigade, alongside of us. In the afternoon we attacked again, taking our objective, Cherisy, and crossed over the dry creek bed, where the Boche plastered us with fish-tails, gas and machine-guns.

"The Colonel and our Majors were wounded that day and next day the battalion was run by subalterns. The command went down to a Captain, but at nightfall of Wednesday not an officer was left and the Sergt.-Major of one of the Companies brought the battalion out.

"Courcellete was child's play to this. It was machine-guns, not shell fire, and they raked us as we pushed up from Cherisy and the river over the ridge. This was about two o'clock Wednesday afternoon. We got our first objective, the chalk pit, and then went on to our final objective, the Fresnes-Rouvroy line, a thousand yards beyond and fifteen hundred from the jumping-off line, but they caught us on the wire and only 15 or 20 reached it. We fell back because we had no officer, bringing away our wounded."

Only three officers were left of the 35 this Battalion brought out of the Amiens show, and they were in reserve. Up to battalion headquarters came a gunner, still carrying his machine-gun, with two bullet holes through it. "Hallo! Lieutenant," he cried. "Here we are again, the glorious 22nd.!" ("Hallo! Lieutenant. Hein le v'l'a le glorieux 22ieme!")

The glorious 22nd.! The Battalion will go on. The body perisheth but the spirit dieth not.

At Brigade Headquarters that evening there came a telephone call from the Sergeant-Major. "I am holding the line with 15 men. What shall we do?"

"Carry on until your supports come up."

The following account is taken from the story of this Battalion:—"The Epic of the 22nd.," by Sergt.-Major Corneloup; La Presse, Montreal:—"Col. Dubuc fell at head of his men; Major Vanier lost a leg; Majors Routier, Roy and

Archambault, Capt. Morgan, Lieutenants Lamothe and Lemieux: such is the entire list of those who had been decorated who were now extinguished, all the glory of the past being aureoled in a bloody apotheosis. In spite of numerous desperate efforts to bring him in, Capt. Morgan remained for 36 hours in the sad No Man's Land. Out of the 22 officers who took part in this homeric struggle, not one was spared. Of the 600 "shock troops" who went into battle, only 70 uninjured answered the roll-call.

"The position won was held. A non-combatant, one of those great natures of the elect, born for devotion, Dr. Alberic Marin, Captain in the Medical Corps, saved the situation. He was following the battle as a spectator, giving first aid to the wounded, when he noticed that our soldiers, deprived of their leaders, were hesitating. In a bound he leapt over the dead, the wounded, those caught in the wire. Rallying this handful of brave men, still hot from the ardor of combat, he carried them along, electrifying them and inspiring them to hold their ground among the resounding crashes which churned the riven earth. In his own turn he fell, victim of gas.

"Our Chaplain, Father Desjardins, worthy successor of the noble Father Crochetiere, was surrounded while smothered in a gust of evil fumes."

Left of the 5th. Brigade, just south of the Arras-Cambrai road in the valley of the Sensee, the 4th. Brigade, Brig.-General R. Rennie, made its third successive attack, having been continuously in the line since the battle opened on Monday morning. But the fighting strength was much reduced, and for this reason the Brigade frontage was limited to 700 yards. Attacking across the open slope, these fine Ontario troops fought their way forward with the utmost gallantry, but the men were tired, and the wire in front being uncut it was impossible to reach the objective, and in face of strong enemy resistance progress was slow. Casualties to officers were very heavy. Every battalion was in line and suffered severely. In addition the 31st. Battalion was sent up in support from the 6th. Brigade, which was in reserve.

Tales of heroism and sacrifice were common these three days, but one example must suffice. At one time when the right flank of the 18th. Battalion, Western Ontario, was held up by machine-gun fire, Lance-Cpl. W. H. Metcalf, a native of Dennysville, Maine, realising the situation, rushed forward under intense fire to a tank passing on the left. With his signal flag he walked in front of the tank, directing it along the trench in a perfect hail of bullets and bombs. The machine-gun strong points were thus overcome, heavy casualties inflicted on the enemy, and a very critical situation relieved. Later, though wounded, he continued to advance until ordered to get into a shell-hole and have his wounds dressed. This occurred in the advance of the 4th Brigade on Vis-en-Artois.

But the men of the 2nd. Canadian Division did not die in vain. If they had not done much to improve the line, they had still held fast and had beaten back all through the day wave after wave of hostile counter-attacks, intent on driving them back over the Sensee. Our fresh troops now coming up were to jump-off from the line they had so stoutly maintained, were to carry on the battle into the heart of the enemy's defense, and there establish the Canadian Corps as the first of the Allied troops to break through the Hindenburg system, at no point so formidable or so bitterly defended as here.

Their failure, glorious as it was, was due largely to matters over which they had no control. We fought that day with our right flank exposed, for the British had not come up to our support. It was only late in the day that London troops stormed the village of Croisilles.

This village was 4,000 yards southwest of our right flank, and the 56th. British Division had fought their way up to its outskirts during the battle of Bapaume on Aug. 24. Thus, for four days, this line had remained static, and, whereas at the opening of the battle of Arras on Aug. 26 the general line of the Third Army was considerably in advance of our jumping-off line, it was now refused. On Aug. 26 Scottish and London troops, indeed, on our right flank, had captured the high

ground between Croisilles and Heninel, in face of strong resistance, chiefly from machine-gun posts. But this did no more than conform to our advance and, there being no corresponding advance on the following days, our right flank was much exposed, particularly from the direction of Hendecourt. The battle, in fact, was throughout a Canadian Corps battle, receiving little or no support on either flank.

On the night of Aug. 28-29 the 2nd. and 3rd. Canadian Divisions were relieved by the 1st. Canadian Division on our right and the 4th. British Division on our left. This Division consisted of first-rate English County troops, and, as we shall see, their contribution to the general success of the Canadian Corps through the hard fighting of the following days was in every respect worthy of their reputation. And none could be higher than that of the famous "Fighting Fourth," distinguished even among the "Old Contemptibles," veterans of a hundred well-fought fields. They still maintained their name as "storm troops," and in the Canadian Corps found worthy company.

CHAPTER V

OPERATIONS: AUG. 29-31

THE next four days were devoted to improving our line so as to afford suitable jumping-off ground for the great attack on the Drocourt-Queant Switch. It resolved itself into desperate and often detached struggles for isolated positions and sections of the enemy's defense. Before entering into some of the details of these operations it will be well to quote Sir Arthur Currie's narrative:—

"During the days succeeding the capture of Monchy-le-Preux the enemy's resistance had been steadily increasing, and it became clear that the Drocourt-Queant line would be very stubbornly defended.

"On Aug. 28 instructions had been received fixing tentatively Sept. 1 as the date on which the Drocourt-Queant line was to be attacked by the Canadian Corps, in conjunction with the XVII Corps. The intention was to capture also the Canal du Nord line in the same operation.

"It was therefore essential to secure, before that date, a good jumping-off line roughly parallel to, and approximately 600 yards west of, the Drocourt-Queant line.

"This was indeed a very difficult task, entailing the capture of the Fresnes-Rouvroy line, of the Vis-en-Artois Switch, and of a number of defended localities of very great strength, notably the Crow's Nest, Upton Wood and St. Servin's Farm.

"The 2nd. and 3rd. Canadian Divisions were now exhausted, and during the night of Aug. 28-29 they were relieved by the 1st. Canadian Division on the right, the 4th. (British) Division (which had been placed under my orders on the night of Aug. 26-27) on the left, and Brutinel's Brigade (formerly the Canadian Independent Force) on the extreme left flank.

"The Heavy Artillery from now on concentrated on the

cutting of the broad belts of wire in front of the Drocourt-Queant line, and the Engineers prepared the bridging material required for the crossings of the Sensee river and the Canal du Nord.

"During the day (Aug. 29) our line had been considerably improved by minor operations. Brutinel's Brigade had pushed forward on their front and captured Bench Farm and Victoria Copse, north of Boiry-Notre-Dame. The 4th. (British) Division in the face of strong opposition, had advanced their line in the vicinity of Haucourt and Remy. North of the Scarpe the 51st. Division had captured the crest of Greenland Hill.

"The command of the 51st. Divisional front now passed to the G. O. C., XXII Corps; and during the night, Aug. 29-30, the 11th. Division, which had been transferred to the Canadian Corps from I Corps, relieved Brutinel's Brigade in the line, the command of that Division also passing to the G. O. C., XXII Corps, on completion of the relief.

"This shortened the line considerably and relieved me of the anxiety caused by the length and vulnerability of the northern flank.

"On Aug. 30, following the reported capture of Hendecourt by the 57th. Division, the 1st. Canadian Division attacked the Vis-en-Artois Switch, Upton Wood and the Fresnes-Rouvroy line, south of the Vis-en-Artois Switch. The attack, a daring manœuvre organized and carried out by the 1st. Canadian Infantry Brigade (Brig.-General W. A. Griesbach), under cover of very ingenious barrages arranged by the C. R. A., 1st. Canadian Division (Brig.-General H. C. Thacker), was eminently successful, all objectives being captured and the entire garrison either killed or taken prisoner. Heavy counter-attacks by fresh troops were repulsed during the afternoon and following night.

"On Aug. 31 the remainder of the Fresnes-Rouvroy line south of the Arras-Cambrai road, including Ocean Work, was captured by the 2nd. Canadian Infantry Brigade (Brig.-General F. O. W. Loomis).

"In the meantime the 4th. (British) Division had doggedly pushed ahead, crossing the valley of the Sensee river and capturing the villages of Haucourt, Remy and Eterpigny. This advance was over very difficult, thickly wooded country, and the fighting was very heavy, particularly in the vicinity of St. Servin's Farm, which, after changing hands several times, remained in possession of the enemy until Sept. 2."

The brilliant fighting on the part of the 1st. Canadian Division, Maj.-General Sir Archibald C. Macdonell, in the days immediately preceding the great assault, is admirably described in this Division's own narrative of its operations, as follows:—"On the night of Aug. 28-29 the 1st. Division relieved the 2nd. Division, the G. O. C. of the 1st. Division taking over the command of the line at midnight. The relief was most difficult. The position of the 2nd. Division front line was uncertain and it was necessary for the relieving troops to form up in extended order and march forward until the foremost troops of the battalion in line was reached. The 3rd. Brigade, Brig.-General G. S. Tuxford, took over the right sector, the 2nd. Brigade, Brig.-General F. O. W. Loomis, the left, and the 1st. Brigade, Brig.-General W. A. Griesbach, came into Divisional Reserve.

"The next day, Aug. 29, passed without incident, except for fairly heavy shelling that was maintained on forward areas and roads. On this day the plans of the Army Commander for an extensive operation tentatively set for Sept. 1, were communicated to the Division. This new attack was to be made by three Divisions, the object being to break the Drocourt-Queant line, overrun the crossings of the Canal du Nord, and also seize Bourlon Wood and the high ground to the north of it. In the meantime the divisions in line were ordered to secure by a series of minor operations the jumping-off line running from Chateau Wood, on the right, crossing the Vis-en-Artois Switch, and to the village of Eterpigny, on the left.

"In order to understand the task before the Corps as a whole, and the 1st. Canadian Division in particular, a brief

description of the ground and the enemy defenses is necessary.

"On the evening of Aug. 29 our front line followed roughly the valley of the Sensee river from Fontaine-lez-Croisilles to Haucourt, where it bent back over a small ridge between this river and the valley of the Cojeul, then over the high ground east of Boiry-Notre-Dame, and continued in a generally northwesterly direction to the valley of the Scarpe. North of the Scarpe the operations were carried out merely to protect the flank of the main attack south of the stream, and need not be considered here. While the valley of the Scarpe began to bend to the northeast practically at our front line, the valley of the Trinquis river began almost at once, and ran due east, joining the Sensee valley 5,000 yards east of our line.

"From ten to twelve thousand yards beyond our line was the valley and the waterway of the Canal du Nord, running almost due north and south. Cutting the Canadian Corps front in halves and running in a southeasterly direction straight to Cambrai, a distance of thirteen miles, was the tree-lined Arras-Cambrai road.

"The natural features, then, were these: Two valleys converging on our northern flank, forming an isolated triangle of ground to be dealt with; then two more convergent valleys, those of the Sensee and the Canal du Nord, with the high ground between, forming a plateau on the right flank, with a distance of 10,000 yards to go before the canal was reached, and on the left breaking into more sharply defined valleys and ridges as the junction of the valley was approached.

"With the exception of one small jog, the Arras-Cambrai road formed the left flank of the 1st. Canadian Division. The right flank ran 3,500 yards south of and parallel to this road.

"On the front of this division, therefore, the ground features were simple. First came the gradual upward slope along the crest of which ran the Hendecourt-Dury road, and roughly paralleling our front line. Then came a gentle valley, and in this depression was the village of Cagnicourt on the right and Villers-lez-Cagnicourt on the left, each being about 6,000 yards

from our front line. Immediately east of Cagnicourt were two small woods—the Bois de Bouche and the Bois de Loison. Then another ridge, and a sharp valley running in a northeasterly direction, with the villages of Buissy and Baralle straggling through it across the entire 1st. Division front. And finally the wooded valley of the Canal du Nord.

"While the natural features presented no great difficulties —until the canal was reached—the enemy had strongly fortified this ground, and it was these heavily-wired and strongly-held trench systems that formed the great obstacle.

"Coming back to the preliminary task of Aug. 30, immediately in front of the 1st. Canadian Division was the Fresnoy-Rouvroy line, sited on the slope leading up to the Hendecourt-Dury road. Two or three thousand yards east of this line was the famous Drocourt-Queant line, a switch off the Hindenburg line, which at this point ran in a generally southeasterly direction some 1,500 yards south of our frontage. Running in a southeasterly direction from Vis-en-Artois, and connecting the Fresnes-Rouvroy and Drocourt-Queant lines, was the trench system known as the Vis-en-Artois Switch. And, beginning at the point where the Drocourt-Queant line crossed the Arras-Cambrai road, and also running east, was a fourth line, known as the Buissy Switch. This system of trenches ran immediately southwest of the villages of Villers and Buissy, joining the Hindenburg line in the vicinity of Inchy-en-Artois, a village situated near the Canal du Nord and just south of the Canadian Corps boundary.

"It will be seen, therefore, that the trenches to be taken by the 1st. Canadian Division ran, in zig-zag fashion, practically to the canal.

"The Canadian Corps' plan for the attack on the Drocourt-Queant line depended on the divisions in line securing a jumping-off position within reasonable distance of this objective. The first thing, therefore, that the 1st. Canadian Division had to do was to take the Fresnoy-Rouvroy line, the greater part of the Vis-en-Artois Switch, Upton Wood and the two strong

obstacles known as Chateau Wood and the Crow's Nest, or, in other words, to advance its line some 3,000 yards before launching the big attack.

"As the Divisional Commander did not wish to incur any risk of dissipating the strength of the two brigades earmarked for the breaking of the Drocourt-Queant line, he decided that the 1st. Brigade—in Divisional Reserve—should carry out this preliminary operation. The date set was at dawn on Aug. 30.

"The task confronting the 1st. Brigade was no light one. There was the strong Fresnes-Rouvroy trench line that already had stopped one attack by the Canadians; there was the Vis-en-Artois Switch line, cutting this system diagonally; there was the fortified obstacle presented by Upton Wood, lying between the Fresnes-Rouvroy line and the Hendecourt-Dury road, there was Cemetery Trench, running in a northeasterly direction from our right flank and passing just east of Upton Wood.

"At first it was decided to attack this area frontally. Later, however, when the Brigade Commander heard that British troops had captured the village of Hendecourt, thus breaching the Fresnes-Rouvroy system just south of his right flank, he evolved a daring plan for the attack. Two battalions, the 1st., Western Ontario, and 2nd., of Ottawa, were to assemble in the vicinity of Hendecourt and attack northeast and north respectively, the first going up Cemetery Trench and the other rolling up the Fresnes-Rouvroy Trench from the south. The 3rd. Battalion, recruited from Toronto district, was ordered to attack astride the Vis-en-Artois Switch and burst the Fresnes-Rouvroy line at its junction with that trench. The artillery then worked out a complicated barrage, or rather two, one protecting each of the attacks from the flanks, and then merging together and sweeping eastwards.

"The attack opened at 4.40 a.m. All went smoothly and the objectives were taken. Heavy fighting continued through the greater part of the day, however, for soon after noon the enemy launched a determined counter-attack under cover of an organized barrage, and penetrated some portions of Upton

Wood and Cemetery Trench. A portion of the 2nd. Battalion in the Fresnes-Rouvroy line at once started another counter-attack, and so brought the enemy to a standstill, but did not drive him out completely.

"An attempt on the part of the 3rd. Battalion patrols to take the remainder of the Fresnes-Rouvroy line that lay between the Vis-en-Artois Switch and the Arras-Cambrai road was not successful, owing to the strength with which the enemy was holding it. Towards evening a portion of the 4th. Battalion, Central Ontario, was thrown into the fight to re-establish our new line. By nightfall this was accomplished, and the enemy driven out of those positions he had secured as a result of his attack at midday.

"The next day, Aug. 31, the 2nd. Brigade, using the 8th. Battalion, Winnipeg, completed the capture of the Fresnes-Rouvroy line as far north as the Arras-Cambrai road, and then in daylight and in the face of heavy machine-gun fire patrols were rushed well forward of the captured line."

The enemy fought with desperate courage, throwing in his reserves lavishly, these including Prussian Guard divisions and a stout Marine division. Thoroughly alarmed by the manner in which our advance was pushed steadily forward despite all obstacles, he brought against us all his available reserves, from both the Douai and Cambrai areas. This was the crucial point of his whole line of defense, and once pierced, the entire Hindenburg System, north and south, the fruit of years of work in which the lives of tens of thousands of Russian prisoners had been squandered, would be turned and rendered worthless. At this juncture it was worth to him, depleted of men as he was, an Army Corps to prevent us crossing the Canal du Nord and driving a wedge through his West Front at Cambrai.

To add to the difficulties of our troops in these days of fierce preparation for the great assault, things were not going well on our right flank. On Aug. 30 London and West Lancashire troops had taken Bullecourt and Hendecourt, the report of which had reached us and encouraged the attack on Upton

Wood detailed above. "But the Germans,"—so runs an account—"being unwilling to give up points so near their main lines of defenses, attacked in great force, and by the evening had driven back our troops to the western outskirts of these villages and to the German trench line between them."

While our 1st. and 4th. Divisions were pushing forward their line on the two following days, the situation on our right was not improved, and when the great attack finally opened on Sept. 2, the left brigade of the XVII Corps fell in line behind our right brigade, and followed up its advance until the opportunity opened of turning off south and capturing Queant.

CHAPTER VI

OPERATIONS: SEPT. 1-3, DROCOURT-QUEANT LINE

WE have now come to the morning of Sept. 1, the date of the great assault as originally designed. But a change had to be made in the plan. "On the night of Aug. 31-Sept. 1," says the Corps Commander, "the 4th. Canadian Division came into the line on a one Brigade front between the 1st. Canadian Division and the 4th. (British) Division.

"The G. O. C. 4th. (British) Division having now reported that he considered his Division unable successfully to attack the Drocourt-Queant line on the front allotted to him, in view of the losses suffered in the preliminary fighting for the jumping-off line, I decided that the 4th. Canadian Division would extend their front and take over 1,000 yards additional frontage from the 4th. (British) Division. This necessitated a change of plan on the part of the 4th. Canadian Division, who a few hours before 'zero' had to place an additional Brigade in the line for the initial assault. Accordingly, the 12th. Brigade (Brig.-General J. H. McBrien) carried out the attack on the right and the 10th. Brigade (Brig.-General R. J. F. Hayter) on the left Divisional front, having first advanced the line to conform with the 1st. Canadian Division.

"It was necessary to postpone the attack on the Drocourt-Queant line until Sept. 2 on account of the additional wire cutting which was still required, and the day of Sept. 1 was employed in minor operations to improve the jumping-off line for the major operation. The important strong point known as the Crow's Nest was captured by the 3rd. Brigade.

"During the afternoon and evening of Sept. 1 the enemy delivered violent counter-attacks, directed against the junction of the 1st. and 4th. Canadian Divisions. Two fresh divisions and two divisions already in the line were identified in

the course of the heavy fighting. Our troops were forced back slightly twice, but the ground was each time regained and finally held. The hand-to-hand fighting for the possession of the crest of the spur at this point really continued until 'zero' hour the next day, the troops attacking the Drocourt-Queant line as they moved forward, taking over the fight from the troops then holding the line."

For the doings of the 1st. Canadian Division on this day there is still no better guide than the narrative already so freely quoted,—"Owing to the strength of the wire in front of the Drocourt-Queant line, the date of the major attack was postponed for one day, in order to give the heavy artillery further time to carry out wire-cutting operations. In order, also, to thicken the infantry attack, the frontage of the 1st. Division was reduced by some 1,500 yards on the night of Aug. 31, the 2nd. Brigade side-slipping south. The 1st. Brigade was relieved during the night, the 3rd. Brigade taking over the right sector with the 15th. Battalion, 48th. Highlanders of Toronto, and the 14th. Battalion, Royal Montreal Regiment, and the 2nd. Brigade the left sector with the 5th. Battalion, Saskatchewan. On the same night the 4th. Canadian Division came into line between the 1st. Division and the 4th. British Division.

"Once again, at dawn the next day, the whole infantry line on the Corps front moved forward. This time the advance of the 1st. Division front was only for a distance of 1,000 yards, the new line being established within the same distance from the Drocourt-Queant line—a suitable striking distance for the great attack set for Sept. 2. In spite of the short advance the fighting was of the most bitter character. As soon as the protective barrage died down the enemy commenced a series of determined counter-attacks down an old trench against the 14th. Battalion. Four such attacks were beaten off by the garrison of the trench during the day, captured stick grenades and Stokes mortars being used freely.

"On the left, on the front captured by the 5th. Battalion,

the enemy flung two battalions against the position at 11.30 a.m., a heavy machine-gun and artillery barrage being used. The two companies in the forward position were slowly forced back to their original line. The Battalion Commander, Lt.-Col. L. R. O. Tudor, however, at once counter-attacked with his remaining two companies. After four hours of heavy fighting the whole position was regained and 125 prisoners captured. The enemy was not satisfied, however, and once again, at six o'clock in the evening, he developed a strong attack. This effort was beaten off except on the extreme left, where two posts were captured by the enemy. Fighting in this area continued intermittently throughout the night, and, as a matter of fact, when the barrage opened in the morning for the major attack on the Drocourt-Queant line, and the 7th. Battalion, Vancouver, passed through, the 5th. Battalion was even then engaged in hand-to-hand fighting for the possession of these posts.

"During the night of Sept. 1 and in the early morning hours following, while the front was in a turmoil of shell-fire and bombing, attack and counter-attack, swift rushes or stubborn resistance, the infantry, artillery, machine-guns and tanks were moving forward along the whole Corps front into their assembly positions for the thrust that was designed to break the Drocourt-Queant line and secure the crossings of the Canal du Nord."

Much the same situation was being combatted by the 4th. Canadian Division, Maj.-General Sir David Watson, north of the Cambrai road. Except for the tremendous finale of the barrage, the night of Sept. 1 and the dawn next day might be described as one continuous battle. Thus from the time the leading Brigades of the 4th. Canadian Division took over the line right up to "zero" hour they were involved in almost continuous fighting, due to enemy counter-attacks and isolated enemy posts, which were calculated to hamper our jump-off and must therefore be reduced. It was in such a situation that a valorous act was performed by Pte. Claude Joseph Patrick

Nunney, of the 38th. Battalion of Ottawa. When his battalion on this day was in the vicinity of Vis-en-Artois, preparatory to the advance of the following morning, the enemy laid down a heavy barrage and counter-attacked. Pte. Nunney, who was at this time at company headquarters, immediately and of his own initiative proceeded through the barrage to the company outpost lines, and going from post to post encouraged the men by his own fearless example. The enemy were repulsed and a critical situation saved.

The 4th. Canadian Division had in the line the 10th. Brigade, Brig.-General R. J. F. Hayter, on the right, resting on the Arras-Cambrai road, and on the left the 12th. Brigade, Brig.-General J. H. McBrien, with the 11th. Brigade, Brig.-General V. W. Odlum, in support, prepared to go through after the attack had well developed. The left of the Division was in touch with the 4th. British Division, which carried on the Canadian Corps line north to the Scarpe.

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It is a dark and stormy night and at times the artillery of heaven drowns out even the roar of the guns. Making our way on foot from Wancourt up over that ridge towards Cherisy, we pass through seeming endless tiers of guns of all calibres brought up in the night and waiting now impatiently upon "zero." It was to be the greatest barrage of the war, and if the artillery could not succeed in cutting lanes for the infantry, we were bound to sustain a disastrous defeat.

Before every show one had been impressed with the faith of our men in the victory of the morrow. For them it was not a thing even debatable; certain objectives had been set the Canadian Corps and they would be taken. It was perhaps natural enough to men who had never known failure in attack, but this was an occasion somewhat different. Exactly a week ago the first phase of this battle had opened. For the first two days it had gone well, a wedge 11,000 yards deep at its apex being driven into the heart of the enemy's defense. But day by day the task had hardened, until the whole line was involved

in a furious battle not so much, often, to win more ground as to hold what we had. There can be now no element of surprise, save in so far as the enemy cannot anticipate the weight and fury of our bombardment. He is thoroughly on the alert and his trenches swarm with men, brought up day by day fresh from his reserves. He is fighting a last ditch battle on which must depend the trend of events many miles beyond sound of these guns. And, moreover, admitting the unquenched spirit of the men, there remained the question of whether their reserves of physical vitality can endure this last ordeal.

Such thoughts as these occur to one waiting upon the hillside a little back of the charred village of Cherisy. Below us, but indistinguishable in the night, lies the valley of the Sensee river; beyond it, on the right, is a veritable graveyard of Canadian soldiers—they await only the burial parties. We have come so far, fought so hard, paid so dear, perhaps here for the first time to meet defeat. And that in its most sanguinary form, for it is a battle that can not be broken off at will of the attacking force. Defeat and retreat is the only alternative of victory.

The night wears away. Towards morning the sky clears but mist still hangs low in the valley. On our left a furious cannonade is in progress, but quite local in character; and there is none of that tense stillness preceding a surprise attack. "Heine" is overhead, flying boldly, and only darkness saves the batteries massed behind the hill.

The night has turned to a gray obscurity when "zero" hour strikes; when pandemonium is let loose. There is here again something different from that famous morning at Gentelles Wood twenty-five days ago—a shrillness of concentration, a ferocity of intense purpose, in our barrage; for the front is narrow and the guns, set so close, are registered on a target even more limited. And there is also the quick, the instant reply from across the valley, as it might be a rolling echo, beating back into our ears the roar of our own guns.

Shells come from all directions. They plow up our hill-

side and search systematically every sunken road, every line of trench, where our supports are congregated. The wicked crack of high explosive mingles with the soft purring explosion of gas shells—to the uninitiated hardly to be distinguished from the harmless "dud"; from the opposing slope reverberate the dread rattle of machine-gun volleys; and at times these minor notes are smothered by the tremendous detonation of heavy guns.

The mist lifts a little and dimly can be seen the "trained elephants," the life-saving tanks, making their way on the far slope among the wire and the machine-gun posts. Two have passed up and over the enemy defense and for a moment are silhouetted against the dawn moving heavily forward. Then their career comes to a sudden end. One, hit in the flank, swings half round. For days to come they are to lie upon the crest, smashed almost beyond recognition by a battery on the reverse slope.

Daylight now picks out one familiar feature after another —the Crow's Nest, a pyramidal hill half a mile north of Hendecourt, Upton Wood, and the serrated outline of the Hendecourt-Dury road. Our infantry are nowhere to be seen; they have passed over the crest; instead, dark in the valley, is a moving mass soon to be distinguished as cavalry. The Drocourt-Queant line is won.

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We have won the Drocourt-Queant line, but the battle is not over. All day long it sways to and fro, and only as dusk gathers is victory secure. Here is the story in the words of the Corps Commander:—"At 5 a.m., Sept. 2, the major operation against the Drocourt-Queant line was launched. Preceded by an intense barrage and assisted by Tanks, the Infantry pushed forward rapidly, and the Drocourt-Queant line (the first objective) and its support line (the second objective), including the village of Dury, were captured according to programme. With the capture of the second objective the Field Artillery barrage was shot out, and the attack further east had

to be carried forward without its assistance. The enemy's resistance, free of the demoralizing effect of our barrage, stiffened considerably, the open country being swept continually by intense machine-gun fire. In addition, the Tanks soon became casualties from enemy guns firing point-blank, and the advance on the left and centre was held up.

"Brutinel's Brigade, reinforced by a Regiment of Cavalry (10th. Royal Hussars) and armored cars, endeavored to pass through to capture the Marquion bridge on the Canal du Nord. Wire, trenches and sunken roads, however, confined the movements of the force to the Arras-Cambrai road; and this was rendered impassable by machine-gun fire and by batteries firing over open sights.

"On the right, however, the 1st. Canadian Division pushed forward despite very heavy machine-gun and direct artillery fire, and captured the villages of Cagnicourt and Villers-lez-Cagnicourt, and the Bois de Bouche and Bois de Loison to the east of Cagnicourt.

"Taking advantage of the breach thus made by the Canadian Divisions, a Brigade of the 63rd. (Naval) Division, XVII Corps, which had followed the attack behind the right Brigade of our right Division, now turned south and advanced in the direction of Queant.

"Further progress made by the 1st. Canadian Division in the afternoon resulted in the capture of the heavily wired Buissy Switch line as far south as the outskirts of Buissy; this largely outflanked the enemy still holding out in front of the Canadian 4th. Division, and compelled their retirement during the night behind the Canal du Nord.

"Although the crossings of the Canal du Nord had not been captured, the result of the day's fighting was most gratifying. The Canadian Corps had pierced the Drocourt-Queant line on the whole front of attack, and the extension of our attack by the XVII Corps on the right had further widened the breach and made possible the capture of a large stretch of territory to the south.

"To stem our advance, and hold the Drocourt-Queant line, the enemy had concentrated eight fresh divisions directly opposite the Canadian Corps, but the unparalleled striking power of our Battalions and the individual bravery of our men had smashed all resistance.

"The number of unwounded prisoners captured exceeded 5,000, and we had identified every Unit of the seven Infantry Divisions and the one Cavalry Division engaged. Our Infantry had penetrated the enemy's defenses to a depth exceeding 6,000 yards.

"In prevision of the attack on the Canal du Nord taking place the same day, the Engineers had rapidly prepared the bridges and roads, advanced the light railways, and pushed forward the personnel and all material necessary for future construction."

CHAPTER VII

OPERATIONS: SEPT. 1-3; DROCOURT-QUEANT LINE—CONTINUED

WE will let the 1st. Canadian Division again tell its own story:—"The attack of the 1st. Canadian Division was carried out by the 3rd. and 2nd. Brigades from right to left respectively, the 1st. Brigade being held in divisional reserve.

"On the morning of Sept. 2, at five o'clock, the artillery and machine-gun barrage opened, and the infantry at once began to move forward into what proved to be a day of bitter fighting. The 3rd. Brigade, at the time of the opening of the attack, had two battalions holding the line, the 15th., recruited from the 48th. Highlanders of Toronto, and 14th., the Royal Montreal Regiment. The two remaining battalions, the 16th., Canadian Scottish of the West, and 13th., Montreal Highlanders, carried out the assault on the Drocourt-Queant line, and were then to be leap-frogged by the 15th. and 14th., who were to capture Bois de Bouche, Bois de Loison and Cagnicourt. The 2nd. Brigade, on the left, were attacking on a one battalion front, and were using two battalions—the 7th., of Vancouver, to capture the Drocourt-Queant system on their front, and the 10th., of Alberta, to carry the attack as far as the western outskirts of Buissy. The 1st. Brigade was to continue the attack from this point and secure the crossings of the Canal du Nord.

"The attack proceeded rapidly, and according to plan up to the time of the capture of the Drocourt-Queant line on the Divisional front, in spite of a very heavy enfilade fire from the right flank, southwest of the village of Cagnicourt. The Tanks, of which there were 18 operating on the divisional front, did great service in the capture of the Drocourt-Queant system.

"Strong resistance was met with by our troops east of this trench line, and the attack slowed up very considerably. The battle devolved upon platoon, company and battalion commanders, and it was only by the initiative and determination of all ranks actually engaged in the foremost lines that the enemy was slowly but surely pressed back. On the right the chief obstacle was the flanking fire from the south; on the left the strongly fortified village of Villers-lez-Cagnicourt and an isolated factory on the Arras-Cambrai road were the centre of resistance. By four o'clock in the afternoon, with the assistance of batteries of artillery attached to battalions, and under cover of machine-gun and Lewis gun fire, our line had been established east of the villages of Cagnicourt and Villers-lez-Cagnicourt.

"A supplementary barrage was arranged for six o'clock that evening, and under cover of it the infantry again advanced. By this time the leading battalions of the 1st. Brigade—the 3rd., recruited from Toronto district, and the 4th., Central Ontario—had become involved in the fighting. The struggle for the capture of the Buissy Switch and for the sunken roads leading south from Buissy was long and desperate, but by individual perseverance our troops, at eleven o'clock that night, had reached a line running roughly north and south just west of the village of Buissy.

"The 3rd. Brigade had suffered very heavy casualties during the day, and were therefore relieved during the night by the 1st. Brigade, the 4th. Battalion going into line with the 2nd. Battalion, Eastern Ontario, in support and the 1st., Western Ontario, and 3rd. in reserve.

"At dawn, therefore, of Sept. 3 our line ran along the railway and road east of Bois de Bouche, as far as the Buissy Switch, and then due north to the Arras-Cambrai road, with a defensive flank thrown back along this road for a distance of nearly 2,000 yards.

"After a day of intense hand-to-hand fighting this was a result of which the Division was proud. In spite of the fact

that the enemy was very strong numerically—as witness the 2,746 prisoners captured in 48 hours of battle—and that he fought desperately—a fact amply proved by the 500 dead in the area in front of the Drocourt-Queant line and around the villages of Cagnicourt and Villers-lez-Cagnicourt; in spite of these obstacles and the high number of machine-guns with which the enemy was armed, the line reached by the leading troops of the 1st. Division was well in advance of that reached by the flanking Divisions. In fact, throughout most of the day the Division fought with both flanks in the air, although troops of the 63rd. British Division succeeded in reaching Inchy that evening.

"The Infantry was well supported by all the other arms of the service. The Artillery, both in its concerted barrage fire and in the work of its advanced batteries, was responsible for the creation of many openings in the enemy's defenses. The attached machine-gun batteries operating with the leading infantry had many opportunities of inflicting casualties on the enemy—opportunities that were seized and made the most of. The tanks, too, were a great factor in the forcing of the Drocourt-Queant line. After our artillery barrage died down, however, every one of the 18 tanks became a casualty.

"So ended the fight for the Drocourt-Queant line. There still remained the Canal du Nord to be crossed."

Many a gallant deed was done that day, but none finer than that of Lt.-Col. C. W. Peck, M.P. for Skeena, B.C., a man well into middle-age who commanded the 16th. Battalion, Canadian Scottish, recruited from Winnipeg to the Coast. The 16th. Battalion, as has been seen, was given the task of capturing the Drocourt-Queant line on our extreme right flank, which was in the air. Lt.-Col. Peck's command quickly captured its first objective but progress was held up by enemy machine-gun fire on his right flank. The situation being extremely difficult, he rushed forward and made a personal reconnaissance under heavy machine-gun fire. Having reconnoitred the position, he returned and reorganized his battalion,

and acting upon his knowledge thus personally gained, pushed them forward and arranged the protection of his flank.

He then went out under the most intensive artillery and machine-gun fire, intercepted the tanks, and gave them necessary directions, pointing out where they were to make for and thus a way was opened for his battalion to push forward. He subsequently gave the requisite support to his men by his magnificent display of courage and fine qualities of leadership. He personally led the advance, although always under heavy fire, and contributed largely to the success of the Brigade attack.

Col. Peck rallied his battalion at a critical moment by instructing his piper—always attached to his person—to march ahead with him into action, skirling his pipes. The piper was wounded but another took his place. Some days later this piper in the Casualty Clearing Station at Duisans, when asked how he did, interrupted thus: "How is old Cy Peck?" and on being told he was uninjured, cried, "Then if he's all right, I'm all right!"

In its assault on the Drocourt-Queant line on the morning of Sept. 2, the 7th. Battalion, of Vancouver, had, as we have seen, a very hard task, and it was by the individual initiative and daring of the rank and file that the positions were taken. Thus Cpl. Walter Leigh Rayfield, a native of Redmond, Wash., rushed ahead of his Company a trench filled with the enemy, bayonetting two and taking 10 prisoners. Later he located and engaged with great skill, under constant rifle fire, an enemy sniper who was causing many casualties. He then rushed the section of trench from which the sniper had been operating, and so demoralized the enemy by his daring and coolness that 30 surrendered to him. Again he left cover and under heavy machine-gun fire carried in a badly wounded comrade.

The 10th. Battalion, of Alberta, passed through the 7th. at Villers-lez-Cagnicourt, but for a time were held up. After an unsuccessful attack, Sergt. Arthur George Knight, a native of Redhill, England, led a bombing section forward under a

very heavy fire of all descriptions, and engaged the enemy at close quarters. Seeing that his party was still held up, he dashed forward alone, bayonetting several of the enemy machine-gunners and trench-mortar crews and, directing his fire on the retreating enemy, inflicted heavy casualties.

In the advance of his platoon in pursuit, Sergt. Knight saw a party of about 30 of the enemy go into a deep tunnel which led off the trench. He again dashed forward alone and having killed one officer and two N. C. O's, captured twenty other ranks. Later on he routed single-handed another enemy party opposing the advance of the platoon.

Sergt. Knight, who enlisted at Regina, died of the wounds he here received. In this brilliant action he was assisted particularly by Pte. Eddie Hume, of Calgary. Corp. W. Paget, of the same battalion, performed an exceptional bombing feat in front of Cagnicourt on the same day, breaking up a strong enemy point of resistance.

North of the Cambrai road, our troops, after their initial success, had before them an extraordinarily difficult task. The 4th. Canadian Division attacked in the first place the Drocourt-Queant line in front of Dury, in itself a veritable fortress. This village is situated on the crest of a slope, which here presents all the character of a smooth glacis, and across this, each 75 yards deep, were three solid tiers of wire. Behind them, and on a higher plane, ran the sunken road from Hendecourt to Dury, and in this road enemy machine-gunners, ensconced in steel and concrete posts, swept the entire field of approach.

Walking over this slope a day or two later, a British staff officer remarked that the position was impregnable had the enemy chosen to defend it. Ah, no! our dead tell the tale. Extraordinary gallantry was shown by the troops. In storming the sunken road, where tank aid was lacking, the 75th. Battalion, recruited from the Missisauga Horse of Toronto, suffered very severely, its loss in two days being 24 officers and 310 other ranks.

The 4th. Canadian Division attacked at 5 a.m. In spite of numerous machine-gun nests inside our barrage, good progress was made, and by dint of stiff fighting in many places the Drocourt-Queant line in this sector was captured on time. Just beyond the last trench of this system the 11th. Brigade and certain battalions of the other two brigades were to leap-frog and continue the advance, but the approach to the leap-frog line and the ground for a great distance beyond it was swept by terrific machine-gun fire from several angles. Our barrage here had shot itself out in the first phase of the attack, and the only other weapons left were powerless to support further advance of the infantry under the circumstances. The second phase of the attack was therefore postponed until the next morning, but during the night the enemy retired to the far side of the Canal du Nord.

The 11th. Brigade, while waiting to go through, was badly cut up on the Arras-Cambrai road, where enemy machine-gunners lined the trenches on the slopes on either hand, just east of Vis-en-Artois. The 10th. and 12th. Brigades lost heavily in their advance, coming under enfilade fire from the flank.

But the spirit of the men was unconquerable, and even the walking wounded had no thought but of victory. "The Boche is fighting damned hard," said a Seaforth Highlander of Vancouver, 72nd. Battalion. "But our lot have taken three trenches and are still going strong."

Beyond Dury the ground slopes back into a depression and then over another bare hillside down again into a rolling valley, commanded from the right by the heights held in strength by the enemy immediately west of the Canal du Nord and north of Marquion, and from the left by the fortified triangle of the three villages, Saudemont, Rumaucourt and Ecourt St. Quentin, while the whole was swept by the enemy's heavy batteries situate on the east side of the canal on the commanding eminence of Oisy-le-Verger, whence direct observation was obtained west to Dury and along almost the entire Cambrai road.

In front of these defenses, on the open ground which nowhere afforded cover of any kind, was an elaborate system of trench and wire, with permanent machine-gun posts, and it was before these that the Division found it could make but very slow progress.

Further to the left, the 4th. British Division had a task no less difficult though different in character. On its immediate front was a high bold hill strongly fortified, and its left flank lay down in the valley of the Trinquis river and amid swamps and marshes. The enemy clung all day in great force to the village of Etaing which was not captured by this Division until the following morning. In the first rush forward good progress was made, many prisoners being captured. The men of the Division were delighted to find themselves alongside of the Canadians. "We helped you Canadians save Arras last April," said a wounded man of the 1st. Hants. Battalion, "and now we are pushing in with you again, but to a very different tune."

After the close of the battle Sir Arthur Currie addressed a message of congratulation to the 4th. British Division, as follows:—"Your task from the beginning was an exceedingly difficult one. You took over in the middle of the battle and advanced steadily each day over very bad ground against most serious opposition, finishing up by what must be for you one of the most satisfactory engagements in which you ever participated. Your success on Monday last was in keeping with your best traditions. The 4th. Division testified in the most forcible manner to the fine fighting qualities of the troops comprising it. To me it was a peculiar satisfaction to have the 4th. Division associated with us, because it was with them the 1st. Canadian Division received its first instructions in the art of war. Monday's battle was not merely a success; it was a glorious victory."

In the hand-to-hand fighting which characterized much of this day's battle, loss among regimental officers and N.C.O's was severe. Among the wounded were Lt.-Col. L. T. Mc-

Laughlin, of the 2nd. Battalion, of Ottawa, and Lt.-Col. C. C. Harbottle, of the 75th Battalion, of Toronto.

Casualties in this fighting were very heavy, and it was only by the greatest exertions and contempt of danger that our stretcher-bearers were able to bring in our wounded. Thus Pte. John Francis Young was acting as stretcher-bearer attached to D Company, 87th. Battalion, Grenadier Guards of Montreal. This company in its advance over the ridge suffered heavy casualties from shell and machine-gun fire. Pte. Young, in spite of complete absence of cover, without the least hesitation went out and in the open fire-swept ground dressed the wounded. Having exhausted his stock of dressings, on more than one occasion he returned under intense fire to his company headquarters for a further supply. This work he continued for over an hour, displaying throughout absolute fearlessness, and his courageous conduct saved the lives of many of his comrades. Later, when the fire had somewhat slackened, he organized and led stretcher-parties to bring in the wounded he had dressed.

Our medical officers too displayed the greatest gallantry, of which the following is an example. Capt. Bellender Seymour Hutcheson, who enlisted at Toronto, went through the Drocourt-Queant line with his battalion, under most intense shell, machine-gun and rifle fire. With an utter disregard to personal safety he remained in the field until every wounded man had been attended to. He dressed a seriously wounded officer under terrific machine-gun fire, and with the assistance of prisoners succeeded in evacuating him to safety. Immediately afterwards he rushed forward, in full view of the enemy, under heavy machine-gun and rifle fire, to attend a wounded sergeant, and placing him in a shell hole proceeded there to dress his wounds.

Similar devotion to duty was exhibited by the Chaplain service. Thus Capt. Graham, chaplain of the 13th. Battallion, Montreal Highlanders, when that unit suffered heavy losses in front of Upton Wood, went out repeatedly in front of

our infantry line, carrying in our wounded from off the wire. He was subsequently wounded. Casualties among the Battalion Chaplains were particularly heavy during these operations.

So ended the great battle. Following its conclusion the Third Army south of us were able to march ahead, rescuing village after village without firing a shot. Everywhere south of us the enemy was falling back. Only to the north, behind the flooded valley of the Scarpe and the Sensee, he clung to his line.

CHAPTER VIII

AFTER THE BATTLE

FIGHTING went on during Sept. 3, 4 and 5, when the enemy was forced back to the east bank of the Canal du Nord all along the line, and the Canadian Corps came into possession of the watery triangle formed by the Canal on the east and the Sensee river on the north.

On our right, south of the Arras-Cambrai Road, the 1st. Canadian Division had not much difficulty during the day of Sept. 3 in pushing forward to the line of the canal, to which the western bank sloped gently down through water-meadows, the only shelter being a few gnarled old pollards on the bank. From Sains-lez-Marquion north the area was flooded and the enemy had good protection for his machine-gunners in the woods that thickly clothed the steep eastern bank.

North of the road our 4th. Division had a much harder task and had sharp fighting before the area was cleared. On the Divisional right the 10th. Brigade fought its way forward to the canal through the enemy defense system resting on the three villages of Saudemont, Ecourt St. Quentin and Rumaucourt, the latter being captured by the 44th. Battalion, formerly of Winnipeg but now recruited from New Brunswick. These villages had been untouched by war and contained great store of ordnance and material, with a complete hospital train. Tucked away behind the impregnable Drocourt-Queant line and beyond the area we shelled, he had built up there a great depot.

From a distance it looks as though a pocket handkerchief might cover them. They stand intact, the churches rising above the red-tiled roofs, the whole nestling in wooded groves. The sight of these villages amid green fields is more eloquent than anything that has gone before of the success of the battle,

for here, as in former years, the Boche had settled down for the winter. He had filled them with his material of war.

But intact though they seem from a distance, on entering there is evidence on every hand of the process of ruin. For hardly is the enemy driven out than he pours upon them the whole fury of his rage and disappointment. From across the canal guns great and small keep up a ceaseless cannonade, and for days gas hangs heavy in their narrow streets. A beautiful spire is that of the church of Ecourt St. Quentin, but even as one admires, a shell hits it fair and square and it disappears in a cloud of dust. Nevertheless the fields are still green. Our soldiers gather pumpkins in the village gardens. It is an astonishing experience to pass into these lush pastures from out the blight and the taint of No Man's Land.

Ecourt St. Quentin must ever figure in Canadian history as the village where Canadian troops first rescued the unhappy imprisoned French people. "Vive les Canadiens! Vive les braves Canadiens!"—it was a glad cry from the heart soon to grow familiar to our ears, but it was first heard at this village. Forty-six persons, for four years held in slavery, hid for several days in one small cellar when the order had gone out for the villagers to be evacuated. Half-starved, emaciated, but very happy and voluble we found them.

Their deliverance was actually effected by Major-General E. W. B. Morrison, G.O.C., Canadian Royal Artillery. A young girl, a slender brunette, embraced him, kissing him on either cheek. "In me," she cried, "my General, the French people salute our savior!" With saddened hearts these poor folk passed back through the desolation of No Man's Land, where they had been wont to visit the fetes and feast days of neighboring smiling villages—Cagnicourt and Dury, Cherisy and Vis-en-Artois, now not to be distinguished from the general ruin.

The 11th. Brigade had some hard fighting, mopping up along the canal bank, where enemy posts held out obstinately. Brig.-General Odlum finally cleared up the situation after he

had made a personal reconnaissance during which he was wounded slightly.

Our 12th. Brigade had a very difficult task in the marshy area between Ecourt St. Quentin and the Sensee River. The 85th. Battalion, Nova Scotia, in particular suffered heavy casualties fighting its way through swampy ground, here bisected with ditches and swept by the fire of enemy machine-gun posts north of the river. They finally cleared the area with the capture of Palluel, a village situate at the juncture of the Canal du Nord and the Sensee, which from here east is canalized.

But we were up against a dead wall. "The enemy had blown up all the bridges on the night of Oct. 2-3," says Sir Arthur Currie, "and was holding a commanding position on the eastern bank of the Canal with a large number of machine-guns. His artillery was very active, more especially from the north, and it was impossible to send bodies of troops by day-light over the long and bare slopes bordered by the Canal.

"Our left flank was now very exposed to artillery fire from the north, and the nature of the ground we were holding, the strength of the obstacle in front of the Corps, and the resolute attitude of the enemy, forbade any attempts to further exploit our success.

"It was necessary to prepare minutely the details of the operation required to attack successfully the Canal du Nord line. Accordingly, no further attempts were made at this time.

"In the night of Sept. 3-4 the 2nd. and 3rd. Canadian Divisions relieved the 1st. and 4th. Canadian Divisions respectively, and the 4th. (British) Division was relieved by the 1st. (British) Division, which had come under the Canadian Corps on Sept. 1 and had been concentrated after that date in the Monchy le Preux-Vis en Artois-Guemappe area.

"The left flank of the Corps was again very long, and in accordance with the policy adopted the 1st. British Division was transferred in the line from the Canadian Corps to the

XXII Corps. I handed over command of that sector—extending from Palluel (exclusive) to Etaing (inclusive) and facing north—to the G. O. C. XXII Corps at midnight, Sept. 4-5.

"The enemy had flooded the valley of the Sensee river and all the bridges had been destroyed. Our Engineers were very actively engaged in an effort to lower these floods and wrest the control from the enemy.

"On the right flank the XVII Corps was engaged in heavy fighting in and around Mœuvres, and all their attempts to cross the Canal du Nord at that point had been repulsed.

"A thorough reconnaissance of our front had shown that the frontal attack of the Canal du Nord line was impossible; the eastern bank of the Canal du Nord was strongly wired and was generally much higher than the western bank.

"The whole of our forward area was under direct observation from Oisy-le-Verger and the high ground on the northern flank, and any movement by day was quickly engaged by hostile artillery.

"No battery positions within a range sufficient to carry on the preparation of the attack, or to support it, were available, and any attempt to bring guns forward of the general line Villers lez Cagnicourt-Buissy was severely punished; the battery positions south and west of this general line were subjected to intense gas shelling every night.

"The Canal du Nord was in itself a serious obstacle. It was under construction at the outbreak of the war and had not been completed. Generally speaking, it followed the valley of the River Agache, but not the actual bed of the river. The average width was about 100 feet and it was flooded as far south as the lock, 800 yards southwest of Sains-lez-Marquion, just north of the Corps' southern boundary. South of this and to the right of the Corps' front the Canal was dry, and its bottom was at the natural ground level, the sides of the canal consisting of high earth and brick banks.

"The attack of the Canal du Nord could not, therefore, be

undertaken singly by the Canadian Corps, but had to be part of a larger scheme.

"This required considerable time to arrange, and until Sept. 27 no changes developed on the Corps' front.

"The obstacle which had stopped our advance also made our positions very strong defensively, and advantage was taken of this fact to rest and refit the Divisions. As much of the Corps Artillery as could be spared was withdrawn from the line to rest the men and horses.

"The line was held very thinly, but active patrolling at nights and sniping were kept up. A complete programme of harassing fire by Artillery and Machine-Guns was also put in force nightly. The Corps Heavy Artillery (Brig.-General R. H. Massie) carried out wire-cutting counter-battery shoots and gas concentrations daily, in preparation for the eventual operations.

"Light railways, roads, bridges and water-points were constructed right up to the forward area, and the bridging material which would be required for the Canal du Nord was accumulated well forward. Ammunition dumps were established at suitable places.

"Detailed reconnaissance of the Canal and trenches were carried out by aeroplane, and also by daring patrols, and all available documents regarding the Canal construction were gathered with a view to preparing the plans for the future attack.

"On Sept. 13, Maj.-General (then Brig.-General) F. O. W. Loomis took over command of the 3rd. Canadian Division from Maj.-General L. J. Lipsett, who went to command the 4th. (British) Division; the former was succeeded in command of the 2nd. Canadian Infantry Brigade by Brig.-General (then Lt.-Col.) R. P. Clark."

The direct observation from Oisy-le-Verger to which the Corps Commander alludes was very annoying to our troops. The Arras-Cambrai road was still the main line of our communications, roads to the north being shot up by enemy bat-

teries now commanding our left flank from north of the river for miles back, while the secondary roads further south had been blown to pieces and it took time to repair them. A lorry could not pass along the Cambrai Road without being subjected to shell fire and high explosive. But nothing could daunt these lorry-drivers, the personnel of the Army Service Corps, men bringing up ammunition, and the drivers of ambulances. The road was strewn with wrecked lorries, but they carried on their task, driving steadily at a speed of not more than five or six miles an hour, picking their way among shell-holes in the "pavés" and giving no more heed to the dangers encompassing them than if they were teaming in their own home towns.

And this was not all. With the quieting down of the battle, the air force with the Corps was reduced to the artillery observation "busses" and a few scouting machines. The enemy took advantage of this to send over an occasional "circus" which for the time held command of the air in this sector.

Late in the afternoon of a September day one of these made its appearance from the direction of Douai, flying high above the plateau just west of the Canal. Against the leader a lone fighting 'plane, whose wings bore the familiar red, white and blue circles of the British R.A.F., launched his attack. Fast and high he flew, but the enemy was higher still. Attacking the enemy leader from an angle below, he fired off his machine-gun, missed, and swung around. But at that instant the enemy caught him with a volley, and his machine burst in flames. Slowly it fell, and before it had fallen far, our gallant airman jumped out and began to fall faster, faster, and still faster than his machine, which followed him as might a leaf floating gently to the ground. He fell into a swampy place and was buried from human ken.

Encouraged by this success, the entire "circus" swooped low down on to the Cambrai Road, flying westward just over the tops of the trees, machine-gunning as they went. Then, when they reached the crossroad to Dury, they swung off south,

down the Drocourt-Queant trench system, but a few feet above the ground, blazing away into our men, crowded there in support. Our "Archies" and even field batteries directed on them a tremendous fusillade, and our men could be seen firing their rifles. But only one shot seemed to take effect, an enemy machine limping off like a wounded duck back over the canal. The rest of the "circus" passed out of sight south.

But it was not always thus. "Old Joey," a slow-flying artillery observation 'plane, was loafing one day along the Canal du Nord, when down on him swooped an enemy fighting machine, of far greater power and speed. "Old Joey" pursued his course unperturbed until "Heine" was upon him—then swung smartly around, bringing the only gun to bear, and in a minute "Heine" went crashing.

We had time to count the spoils. Since Aug. 26, the Canadian Corps and the British Divisions fighting under it, had encountered and overwhelmed no less than eleven enemy divisions, while four other divisions had been engaged partially and identifications secured of elements of three more. Five complete trench systems were taken and the captured area approximated 56 square miles, with an average penetration of twelve and a quarter miles. Ten thousand, three hundred and sixty prisoners of all ranks were captured and 22 villages, while the material was great beyond reckoning, chief being two 4.1 inch long naval guns, 89 heavy and field guns, 1,016 machine-guns, 73 trench mortars, two searchlights and one helio, besides wagons, horses, and vast quantities of ammunition and engineering supplies.

But war is not all victory. There is the agony and sacrifice. Busy across this rolling plain are our burial parties and it is not only the Hun they bury. Some of our men lie stark and huddled under lee of enemy machine-gun posts; others still hang in the fastnesses of the wire. Long lines of Red Cross lorries move to the rear.

Far across the seas, from Cape Breton to Vancouver Island, from the International Boundary to remote northern outposts,

soon will flutter little yellow messages, bringing sorrow and anguish to quiet firesides. But they have not suffered in vain; by their exertions and their sacrifice they have brought the war appreciably nearer its close.

It is a melancholy scene. Down the Cambrai road through Vis-en-Artois, past Dury on the left and Villers-lez-Cagnicourt on the right, all is desolate. It is a typical No Man's Land landscape. The countryside is pitted with shell-holes and scarred with trenches. Avenues of trees along the road show only blasted stumps. There is not a green thing. Everywhere is the debris of war, the litter and the ruin. Broken lorries, shattered remnants of an armored car, the twisted rails of a light railway, scrap-iron of all descriptions, ammunition boxes piled high—these things cumber the roadside. Everywhere are horses in various stages of decomposition. Here and there are rows of our dead, awaiting burial parties. Over all is a brooding stench of decay and stale gas.

CHAPTER IX

NO MAN'S LAND

ON Sept. 3, the day after the Drocourt-Queant line is smashed, the 1st. Echelon of Canadian Corps Headquarters moves up from Noyelle Vion to Neuville Vitasse.

We follow the headquarters of the 1st. Canadian Division, and that in its turn had taken possession of a captured enemy headquarters. Two miles east of Neuville Vitasse lies the village of Wancourt, low-lying on the banks of the Cojeul, and between them is the valley where our troops in support are crowded. A secondary road, in shocking bad condition, runs east from Neuville Vitasse downhill through this valley, and so up over the Wancourt Ridge to drop down into the valley of the Sensee at Cherisy. Continuing, it switchbacks over one ridge after another through Hendecourt and Riencourt to Queant. From the eastern suburbs of Arras, through its entire length to Queant, the road bisects No Man's Land, which here therefore has a depth of twelve miles. That is the segment of total destruction and does not include the tattered fringe west of Arras and east of the Canal du Nord to Cambrai.

About a thousand yards east of Neuville Vitasse, where this road debouches from the slope into the valley, what is little more than a track turns off to the right, passing up over the Heninel Ridge in a general southeasterly direction. Like so many roads in the district, this track, by the wear of centuries, has become so worn down as to present the characteristics of a sunken road or defile. A few hundred yards toward the ridge the enemy had here established his divisional headquarters, with an elaborate system of dug-outs on the west side of the road, protected by the high bank from all but plunging fire.

The disadvantage of taking over enemy dug-outs in any

situation at all is that the defense is exposed in reverse, or, in other words, enemy shells may explode right in their mouths, facing that way. Nothing of the kind indeed happens here, but it is a fact worth bearing in mind as a constant feature of our advance. In the old days of trench warfare, when we thus captured and consolidated an enemy trench system, we proceeded at once to dig shelters on the opposite side, as being less exposed. But in the advance that was now beginning and was to gain more and more impetus as the weeks went by, there was no time for anything of the kind. Not until we cleared the entire trench system, and began to billet in inhabited villages, did our men get any kind of comfort or shelter. For the most part they slept in the open field, each man scooping out for himself a shallow shelter, digging a pit at the bottom for drainage.

This track leading up to Corps Headquarters is a villainous mud-hole, and in the days to follow the most distinguished visitors, including high French officials and our Army Commanders, come to congratulate the Corps on its achievement, as well as parties of Canadians from London, are all too apt to mire their cars in its treacherous bottom. The dug-outs do not accommodate all the staff, and some of its higher ranks live and work in Armstrong huts erected along the sunken road, but most of us are under canvas, the whole camp being neatly camouflaged with particular view to the aspect from the sky.

We remain in this hideous spot, the very heart and core of No Man's Land, most of September. For days on end it rains. Tents are crowded close on every available piece of high ground, but the floor of each must be sunk below the surface and in effect becomes little better than the bottom of a shell hole. Canadian Engineers are soon at work laying duck-walks along the road, but whole sections disappear at night, passing surreptitiously into these tents to afford an uneasy footing above the standing water. Such mysterious depredations daunt the indefatigable engineer not one whit, and about the time we move on to Queant, the camp presents a neat and ordered ap-

pearance, with a solid roadbed built up from the ruins of neighboring villages.

In early September, however, a worse situation cannot be imagined. "Heine" is a fairly regular visitor at night and no lights are allowed. The bugle call and the dreary cry of "lights out—lights out," is as regular as dinner hour. It is impossible to take two steps in the dark without falling into a shell hole or stumbling over wire. Very early in the morning Fritzie has an uncomfortable habit of waking us up with a fusillade, and during all these weeks he continues sending long-range shells into Arras, plastering the railway station and yards. At set intervals there is a whine overhead, and long after comes the muffled sound of the explosion.

Back behind the camp, on top of Heninel Ridge, is the Corps wireless plant, where Signals is at work day and night. From here a wide view of the surrounding country presents itself. Northeast, across the valley, Monchy-le-Preux stands out, a sentinel. At sunset a few misshapen tree trunks, stripped of their foliage, etched sharp against the western glow, mark the ridge of Neuville Vitasse.

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For four years this desolated strip east of Arras has been the battlefield. We are situate indeed in midst of the original Hindenburg line.

In the dim days of creation there might have been such a scene as this—the earth void and formless. But to it are added the despair and the melancholy of the blotting out of what once was a smiling countryside. Villages dotted these hills, but where once was the village park, now only are the maimed and blackened stumps of trees and below a rubble of brick and charred timber. Even the street outlines have disappeared; ruthless necessity of military roads has cut straight through the debris.

The soil is a good light loam on chalk. Generations ago—so it seems—these broad uplands were intensively cultivated by their thrifty peasant proprietors. Now the most careful

search fails to reveal the mark of a plow or any trace of the hand of man. It is as if a malignant subterraneous power had fretted the surface and robbed it of all form and meaning. Pock-marked by shell holes, great and small, scarred by deep trench systems old and new, each sunken road lined with the foul mouths of dug-outs; these once bright fields are as inanimate as a corpse, shrouded in cerements of rusted barbed wire.

. . . . . .

Dreary, desolate and gray, it is a landscape that crushes the imagination and torments the spirit. In all these years of trench warfare there has been only this nothingness in front of the heroic defenders. Overhead screamed messengers of death, plowing up the land around them. The filthy trench and verminous dug-out was their sole alternative. It is incredible that they should have endured, have fought on, have abandoned themselves to such a life in such a place for an idea; with no hope, no prospect of alleviation or change save through death and the hospital cot. In their miry squalor they could not see the bright dawn of today. Yet they took everything in trust. They grumbled; they suffered; but they endured; they fought on.

. . . . . .

This frayed fringe of battle stretches from Flanders to the Vosges, varying only in comparative terms of ruin. The Hun may take of the life but not of the character of the French people. There is something cosmic in their mute unconscious resistance, not so much of the men, nor of the admirable women and children, but of the soul of a nation that suffers but does not despair.

In this brooding area are to be marked the distinctions between the waning and cessation of life. Before us all has gone, but in Arras still is some sign of life, and further back the villagers, their roofs untiled and windows unglazed, carry on the daily task, dulled even to a sudden burst of long-range shelling or the rain of blind hate from a starry sky.

This No Man's Land is a technical term of the war whose

significance can be captured only through the imagination. Here once a village flourished; mill-wheels turned and hither creaking wagons drew loads of grain; here processions wound up to the village church, gay for the marriage festival, or white-bannered for the solemn pledge of youth and maid; here wended also the decent funeral cortege; here on his appointed day M. le Maire made his oration on France and her free spirit; here the good citizens chatted at evenings upon the benches in the square; and here worthy pupils, duly garlanded, received their modest honors.

It is necessary to reconstruct these humble scenes to appreciate the devastation. The areas of such villages are wiped out. Their familiar features have vanished. Vanished too are their children. Some are dead. Some cower in cellars at the fringe of No Man's Land. Some have been taken by the Hun, homeless and afraid.

Here are fair lands of France. Here to the cry of the plowman the yoked oxen strained and in due season the binder reaped of the earth her abundance. Ordered stacks peopled the valleys and into their fastnesses drove the threshing-machine. In and out that pleasant scene ran the shuffle of children's feet, and the bright thread of children's laughter.

All are obliterated. Blotted out are the village and the countryside. There remains the anguish of a people that would not be subdued. And in its hoarse note of defiance there mingles—as bitterest seed from the trodden grape—the pitiable note of stricken childhood. Four years of war is an immeasurable span in the life of a child. It is an implacable generation France is rearing on this borderland.

. . . . . .

The scene is on the road from Valenciennes to Mons, long weeks after. Our troops, streaming forward, crowd against the left ditch another current trickling westward. It is the French evacuées, returning from liberated Mons to seek their homes—but much against the wish and advice of the civil authorities.

A woman, old and bent, is pushing a two-wheeled cart, piled high with bedding, all she saved when evacuated. A sturdy lad is yoked in front, throwing his weight on the rope. We ask some questions. . . "And where are you going?" "Back to our home, Monsieur," he cries joyfully, "back to our home in Wancourt."

"In Wancourt!" These, too, must pass through the Drocourt-Queant line.

CAMBRAI

CAMBRAI

CHAPTER I

CONFRONTING THE CANAL DU NORD

THERE comes a time when the spent athlete, having passed his goal, throws himself panting on the ground and relaxes his strained muscles; his heart labors visibly under his bared chest. Thus the Canadian Corps, after nine days' intense fighting culminating in the capture of the Drocourt-Queant line, abandoned itself to rest.

But it is rest of a comparative kind only; the cessation of hand-to-hand fighting but not relief from the perils of war. We have fought our way into this watery triangle—or, one should rather say, peninsula—formed by the flooded area of the Canal du Nord on the east and the Sensee and its marshes on the north. On the east we have settled down to sniping, raids and local shoots, and the enemy is equally active. On the north he holds the entire country south and southwest of Douai to the borders of Roeux, Gavrelle and Oppy, for here his great system of defense is still intact and the British line has hardly advanced from where it lay on Aug. 26.

Our troops holding the line have a lively time, and have to improvise both defense and shelter. Daring things are done in the way of reconnaissance, and Canadian Engineers in particular spend the day and night crawling on their bellies along the canal side, exploring for practical crossings, or flying low over its course, careless of death. But relatively few troops are actually in the line, because the position is one of great natural strength, and the enemy is in no mood to attack in force.

Exposed as they are, lying out for the most part in the

open, our troops in the line have a bad time of it. The 2nd. Canadian Division is in line on the right, from Inchy to the Arras-Cambrai road, and from there north the line is held by the 3rd. Canadian Division. Casualties are heavy. Thus the 6th. Brigade has in the line from Sept. 6 to 16 the 31st. and 27th. Battalions, and the latter has 75 casualties in that period, the loss of the former being even heavier, with a number of men gassed.

The character of the fighting is well illustrated by the following extract from the narrative of the 4th. Brigade, whose command was here taken over by Brig.-General G. E. McCuaig, Brig.-General R. Rennie having been appointed to a command at Bramshott:—"The 2nd. Canadian Division was held up at the Canal du Nord, with the enemy patrols on the near (western) side. The troops then settled down to the work of building a main line of resistance. The possession of Inchy and Moeuvres was still in dispute and a counter-attack was possible from that direction. On Sept. 12-13 the 4th. Brigade relieved the 6th. Brigade in the front line. . .

"The occupied line extended from a few hundred yards north of the Arras-Cambrai road along the Canal du Nord to the lock, just north of Inchy. It was about two miles in length and there were practically no trenches. Rifle pits and shelters had been made by the other troops, but these were very meagre and unconnected. There could be no movement from one pit to another during the day. The enemy machine and field guns were very busy, and for a while the troops suffered heavily, despite the splendid camouflaging of their positions with boughs and other covering.

"The first task was to build a support line. This was sited on top of the ridge in front of the Buissy Switch. Large working parties from both reserve and support Battalions were engaged on this every night under direction of the Engineers. When this support line was finished a front line was begun, a section being built at a time. It was a period of dangerous and difficult work by night and for lying low by day. There were

several fierce patrol encounters by night around Baralle wood and the big German dump."

Similar conditions exist north of the Arras-Cambrai road, a particularly nasty spot being in the neighborhood of Ecourt St. Quentin, where the enemy has direct observation from the commanding heights east of the canal.

Of units not in the line, some are lucky enough to go back to rest at Arras and beyond. But many are held in close support in the old trench lines, living in enemy dug-outs. For there is a continual straafing of this area day and night, and our troops, though far removed from the battle line, suffer many casualties. Thus Lt.-Col. G. R. Pearkes, V.C., of the 116th. Battalion, Central Ontario, was severely wounded by a stray shell on the afternoon of Sept. 15 in the Guemappe area.

"Rest" is no picnic in No Man's Land. In the first days after the battle there is a listlessness among such battalions. The men, thoroughly tired out, lie about among the trenches and dug-outs they occupy, sleeping a great deal or gossiping about the battle. Losses have been so heavy that there is not the same elation that accompanies such a victory as Amiens. Indeed, the men are decidedly pessimistic.

"Well, I guess the old Corps is pretty well done in this time," says a grizzled miner from the Porcupine. "You just mark my words; we'll go out to rest in a day or two and shan't do another tap till next spring. It's just like Passchendaele all over again."

There is, in fact, a general sense of depression. We have won our victory, but where have we landed? In the heart of No Man's Land, stretching to our strained imagination in all its horror through many bitter weeks of winter. For we have no notion in our head but that the war is going on well into 1919. Presently—perhaps where we lie—the Boche will make a stand; and we shall "dig in" for the winter—the winter, the winter, the abominable winter.

Such a feeling in early September is natural, inevitable. But it may be here noted that much the same idea obtained

until well on into October, until indeed weeks after the Boche had made his first proposals for an armistice. To take a still greater leap ahead, few men in the Canadian Corps believed in the armistice as an accomplished fact on the very night before it was promulgated. The reason for this lay, no doubt, in the fact that it was the fortune of the Canadian Corps to be fighting its way hard right up to what one may term the "zero hour" of peace.

But the view of the man in the field is extraordinarily circumscribed. His platoon is his home—or, perhaps, you may extend it to his company; other companies in his battalion are next-door neighbors; he has a pretty good guess as to just what they are about, and once in a while stops in his own work to take a look over the fence into their yard. But the battalion —we are speaking of the private soldier—is the limit of his range. And, indeed, company officers have but slightly wider vision, and it is only the battalion officers who know about the doings of the brigade. These limitations, but in widening eddies, are to be found as one mounts progressively through the brigade to the division, to Corps, and to the bright eminence of Army. Army knows it all, of course, or it wouldn't be Army.

The point of all this is just simply that, in the varying degree of one's opportunity—whether one be private or captain or colonel—one is so engrossed in the immediate battle picture that one fails to grasp the significance of the war map as a whole. One may be certain that no battalion commander engaged in the Drocourt-Queant line affair, gave a thought for several days to what was going on north or south. So far as he was concerned, the war was being fought and won—or lost—right then and there.

And how much more does not this apply to the private, who has not seen a daily paper for a month and has not the privilege of reading the news bulletin telegraphed daily by Army—a fount of information that irrigates in its passage thirsty minds at Corps, Division and Brigade; but has become

a trickling stream before it reaches the Battalion, and dries up entirely as it gets to Company H.Q.? He does know, though, that over half his platoon are casualties, and the world is very black.

Rumors of disaster chase each other round. "Let me tell you sumpthin' on the strict Q.T. The bally Brigade is all so cut to pieces that its mother's son wouldn't know it. The Sergeant, he says, we'll have to go out to Boulogne to refit—good old Boulogne—the sooner the better."

But there is a more hopeful note. "I hope to God they won't leave us stuck here," says another. "Four days rain; I'm fed up on No Man's Land. They say there's fine billets in Cambrai. Why don't they let us have a go at that and put in the winter there? That 'ud be something worth fighting for."

Cambrai exercises a curious psychological influence on the Corps. It is the subject of talk in the mess, and the man in the ranks regards it as some vague El Dorado. From the Bois de Bouche, a considerable height about a mile southeast of Cagnicourt, we have a plain view of Bourlon Wood and hill, and we know that right behind, in the valley of the Scheldt, lies the fair city of Cambrai.

Cambrai, in fact, dominates our imagination. Ask a soldier its population, and he will say offhand, "Oh, about a quarter of a million or so." And he has some idea of cambric looms and that it was the capital of the old Frankish kings. This interest is because it is the first considerable city confronting us that has lain hid in the enemy grip since 1914. Amiens and Arras were familiar enough; familiar as the gay trysting places of men on leave; less familiar in ruins. But Cambrai has for us all the charm of the unknown, a name that stirs the imagination and quickens our interest. We conceive a city of beautiful streets and ancient palaces crowded with monuments of art and war. No disappointment could have been greater than Cambrai as at last we came to see it.

But we have wandered afar from our gossiping soldiers. In such case as this the veteran N.C.O's are invaluable.

Eternal grumblers themselves, they will not allow it in their men. "What're you talking about?" cries one. "The old Brigade done in? Why, you wooden-head, this Brigade at only half its strength can lick the tar out of any other brigade in the Corps, and throw in a Boche division at that! This battle was nothing. You should just have seen Regina Trench, my boy, and then you could talk!"

With so many commissioned officers casualties, the value of these tried and tested old Sergeants becomes more and more apparent. Just about this time the Corps receives for the first time reinforcements who, to make no bones about it, are conscripts, drafts under the compulsory service act passed at Ottawa a year ago, though they are to prove themselves as good soldiers as any. It would seem that these men—many of whom were only held back by family circumstances from voluntary enlistment—had been snubbed and bullied on their training grounds. They meet here a very different reception, for they enter at once the brotherhood of arms. They are welcomed on precisely the same footing as had been the volunteer reinforcements—it was made very plain to them by these old Sergeants that despite their intensive training in England they were very green, nothing more than rookies, and must learn all over again—for which (with becoming modesty) they were dead lucky to have come to the best school in France.

The N.C.O's enjoyed immensely this business of the breaking in of the young idea—young in war if not in years. But, beyond the hazards of battle, their own ranks are depleted because many of them are over in England taking the officers' course, to fill vacancies in their respective battalions. In the recent fighting the percentage of casualties among officers has been out of all proportion, and this loss made itself felt throughout the fighting to follow. Anticipating a little again, this curious fact may be recited. A certain battalion received on Sept. 26 back from England 16 of its old N.C.O's who had successfully taken their course, and all went into battle next morning. Next day every one of them was a casualty, and

within 48 hours the bulk of them were back again in Blighty.

But in a day or two there is a marked change. The men begin to sit up and take interest in their immediate surroundings. The Y.M.C.A. has opened up a canteen nearby and long lines of men gather, a patient queue, waiting their turn for cigarettes and biscuits and chocolate. Mail comes in—wonderful is the efficiency of the Corps post-office throughout these operations; mail comes in and there are letters from home to be answered, letters one may be sure from mothers and sweethearts, never more welcome than now. There are other letters to write—not so easy, taking much thought, but inspired by such a loving kindness for the chum who died upon the field, that when at last they reach a distant sorrowing heart, they bring a brave message of comfort—"He was the best pal I ever had and he died a Hero; all through the battle I felt safe because he was by me; and then I had to go on alone," ran one we were privileged to see long afterwards.

But now a battalion band strikes up, a group of men gather, a football makes its appearance. Laughter breaks out in the crowd; the battle and anguish are forgotten; these again are bright Canadian boys intent on having a good time. The Y.M.C.A., "Soldiers' Friend" indeed, produces the paraphernalia of baseball, and soon two picked teams are at it hard, battling for the honor of the battalion, the men crowding in behind the plate, yelling support and making side-bets on each inning. Battalion officers umpire, and it is not hard to see they have the confidence of their men.

It is a merry scene in the waning light. The Corps has come to life again. "When you see this going on," remarks an officer whose battle experience dates from Ypres in April, 1915, "you may be sure the men are ready to go in again. These two battalions would put up a great scrap right tonight. But 24 hours ago they were a pretty sad looking outfit."

We have seen how the 2nd. and 3rd. Canadian Divisions had taken over the line of the Canal du Nord on the night of Sept. 3-4. They pushed right down to the west bank, but this

being exposed to direct fire from the opposing wooded slopes, it was held only by light patrols. The enemy showed a good deal of activity and particularly in the region of Sauchy-Cauchy did not hesitate to push his raiding parties across under cover of night. Our outposts were thus continually engaged. Later on our 2nd. Division took over the entire Corps front.

South of the Corps boundary, from Inchy-en-Artois to Moeuvres, the situation of the XVII Corps was not so good, for the enemy still clung fast to a strip on the west side of the canal, and to the canal bed itself, in this sector unfinished and dry. The enemy was in great force, and it seemed, indeed, as if we were definitely held up on the west side of the canal.

It was in these circumstances that the Corps Commander came to a momentous decision. Sir Arthur Currie was asked to attack on the present Corps front, and thus turn the canal from the north. He refused to make what he regarded as a useless sacrifice of his men, pointing out the difficulties of the position, the flooded area immediately in front of us, backed by wooded slopes, and our exposed northern flank. But he submitted instead alternative proposals, which finally were adopted and led to the great battle of Cambrai.

CHAPTER II

THE FIRST BATTLE OF CAMBRAI

FROM the Bois de Bouche, five miles distant, southeast by east, Bourlon Wood looms up to view, dark and threatening, precisely as it looms up from any surrounding prospect whatever. Between us lies the valley of the Canal du Nord, with beyond the ground sloping up to Bourlon, bare save for an occasional little wood, such as that of the Quarry.

Standing on the 75-metre elevation of the Bois de Bouche and facing Bourlon, a little to the right and on the west side of the canal lies the village of Inchy-en-Artois, and as far to the left, 2,000 yards northeast of Inchy but on the east side of the canal, is the village of Sains-lez-Marquion. Two thousand yards south of Inchy, on the west side of the canal, is the village of Moeuvres, which not only proved impregnable during every stage of the first battle of Cambrai, but only recently had withstood the assaults of troops of the Third Army on our right.

Immediately east of Inchy a canal stretch of 3,000 yards was still uncompleted, and therefore dry. These works are not situated in the valley bottom, but form an embankment on its eastern slopes, and this stronghold is reinforced by a series of lifting locks, each in itself a fortress, from 40 to 60 feet in depth, edged by steep banks and masonry. Opposite Inchy, from the top of the east bank, presenting an elevation of about 60 metres, the hill slopes steadily back and up to where at the crest of Bourlon Wood it attains an extreme elevation of 110 metres, thus commanding a clear view of all movements west of the canal as far as the Bois de Bouche.

All this slope presents for enemy machine-gunners a natural glacis. Paralleling the Canal, running from two to five hundred yards east of it, is the heavily-wired trench sys-

tem known as the Canal du Nord line. Midway between this and the summit is the strongly fortified Marquion line. Over the crest of the slope and back of Bourlon Wood is the Marcoing line. Bourlon Wood is a fortress in itself, its batteries of artillery and machine-guns dominating the approach.

We are already familiar with the features north of Inchy —the flooded area, with all bridges demolished, and any attempted crossing entirely dominated by the superior east bank. Impregnable to assault from the west, the chain of villages lying along the east bank, Sains-lez-Marquion, Marquion and Sauchy-Lestree, screened by woods and swamps and extending north to the high ground of the town of Oisy-le-Verger, has to be reckoned with by an attacking force crossing the canal further south and striking thence eastwards—for until this strip has been cleared of its garrison, it presents a highly vulnerable flank.

Immediately south of Moeuvres runs the Bapaume-Cambrai road, a first-class highway though now shell-torn, passing just under the southern slope of Bourlon Wood, through the village of Anneux, and thence east to Cambrai through the village of Fontaine-Notre-Dame, 1,500 yards east of the wood. Three or four thousand yards further east the road parallels, but at some little distance north, the Scheldt Canal, or, to give it its French name, the Canal de l'Escaut, and known also, south of Cambrai, as the Canal St. Quentin.

A mile and a half north and a little east of Fontaine-Notre-Dame is the village of Raillencourt, situate on the Arras-Cambrai road. This road, after crossing the Canal du Nord at Marquion, runs in a straight line southeast through Raillencourt and St. Olle into the Faubourg Cantimpre, where it joins the Bapaume road at an acute angle, the combined road then passing east across the Scheldt Canal into the City of Cambrai.

Two thousand yards east of Fontaine-Notre-Dame, the Scheldt Canal, which up to now has followed a general northerly course, swings off almost sharp to the east, and then, 2,500 yards further on, as it reaches the Faubourg Cantimpre, trends

off again to the north. At the point where it turns east, the strongly fortified Marcoing line, the last organized trench system west of Cambrai, passes from the east to the west side of the canal, and then takes a northerly course just east of Raillencourt and between that village and Sailly, adjoining it to the northeast. Thence it passes in a northeast direction to a little west of Sancourt, where it joins up with another strong trench system, running off at right angles west to link up with the Canal du Nord line south of Sauchy-Lestree.

Forming a strong pivot of defense, the village of Haynecourt lies at the junction of the Marcoing line and this western trench line, 5,000 yards northeast of Bourlon village, itself situate against the northwest slope of Bourlon Wood. Between Bourlon and Haynecourt passes the Arras-Cambrai road, and on this line, a thousand yards south of the road, is the considerable elevation known as Pilgrim's Rest. One more tactical feature may here be noted, this being the railway that after crossing the Canal du Nord at Sauchy-Lestree, winds up the hill through many deep cuttings, skirting Bourlon village on the north and joining the Bapaume-Cambrai road a little east of Fontaine-Notre-Dame, whence it follows the course of the road into Cambrai.

There are thus three distinct trench systems, all running more or less parallel to the Canal du Nord in a north and south direction; first, the Canal du Nord line; then, midway up the slope, the Marquion line; and, finally, behind Bourlon Wood, the very strong Marcoing Line. Between these trench systems the enemy had organized many series of fortified shell-holes, protected by "spider-web" wire, and it was in fighting through this maze, rather than in the actual storming of the trenches, that our heaviest losses were to be incurred.

In these September days of waiting we are all studying the campaign of the previous November, now known as the First Battle of Cambrai. But different indeed are the plans and execution of such operations one gathers from the men who fought them from the stereotyped accounts of the contemporary his-

tories of the war; for embalmed in the official reports, on which these are necessarily founded, are often misstatements of fact and distortions of perspective. The patient historian of the future must dig below this surface if he is to discover truth in all her aspects, unclouded by prejudice and untarnished by self-interest.

Bourlon Wood and the whole surrounding battlefield is to enter so sharply, so poignantly, into the history of the Canadian Corps, that a sketch of this first battle is an essential preliminary to what is to follow. We shall be concerned not so much with its course from day to day as with its general scheme and the reasons for its relative failure.

After his brilliant success with the Canadian Corps at Vimy Ridge, Sir Julian Byng received well-deserved promotion to the command of the Third Army, then vacant by the removal of General Allenby to Palestine. It was not in his nature to sit down to passive defense while hard fighting was going on elsewhere; and so he evolved the plan of attack, which, as we have seen in the account of the Amiens show, unsuccessful in result though in some degree it was, was nevertheless destined to revolutionize conditions on the West Front, sounding the death knell of trench fighting and preparing the way for open warfare. Oddly enough that brilliant plan was not only the germ of our present success, but seems also to have supplied the inspiration for the great German offensive of the spring of 1918.

Struck by the fact that the battle in the north was not going so well as had been hoped, Sir Julian Byng, in July, 1917, came to the conclusion that a diversion on the right flank of the Third Army might not only draw enemy troops from the north but might seriously interfere with any plans the enemy might have for a counter-offensive on the large scale. He therefore laid his plan before the British Commander-in-Chief, asking that his divisions in the line be supported by six fresh divisions, all the tanks and the whole of the cavalry; the idea being a secret attack unheralded by the alarum-bell of a heavy and pro-

tracted artillery preparation, as then was the fashion; a rolling artillery barrage and the tanks being relied upon to break down the way for the infantry, while the cavalry were to seize any opportunity of passing through.

It is to be presumed that Sir Douglas Haig was sympathetic, but it was a new idea, never popular at G.H.Q., and the dreadful fighting in progress on the north seemed to deny the diversion of the necessary troops. Shortly after this the 6th., 35th., 40th. and 50th. Divisions were sent north, and for the time being the project was out of the question.

But Sir Julian, enamored of his idea, was not to be discouraged, and early in the autumn he advanced it again. This time he received encouragement, and was told he should have the Canadian Corps for the operation. For just 36 hours the Third Army Commander saw his great plan fructifying, with to his purpose the Corps he had done so much to make what it was, when there came the news that the Canadian Corps too was ordered north. Passchendaele destroyed any chance it had of taking part under its old leader in these new battle tactics.

After this a rot set in for our cause; Russia had gone to pieces and Italy was invaded; divisions had to be hurried to her support from the West Front. But whatever the cause—perhaps because there was need for desperate measures, and the plan, while offering minimum risks, held out great prospects—it came about that in mid-October Sir Douglas Haig was finally converted and the Third Army authorized to go ahead with its preparations. Instead of six fresh divisions, however, the battle must be fought with divisions already battle-weary, though all the tanks and cavalry were promised.

It is not to our purpose to deal with this very interesting operation at length, except insofar as it has a direct bearing on the second battle of Cambrai. The battle opened at dawn of Nov. 20, so soon as there was light enough for the tanks to see. There was a tremendous concentration of these, no less than 460 being on the line, and the whole attack had been carefully

rehearsed, each tank having its track at the jumping-off place marked out with its number; while the troops to follow were trained beforehand to manœuvre with that particular tank. These tanks were of an early model, and could not cross unaided the Hindenburg line, here 14 feet wide and eight deep. So the idea was conceived of a fascine or faggots suspended from their bows, to be dropped into the trench, and over which they climbed up the other side. This plan worked out perfectly in practice.

The surprise was complete, and for a time everything went well, the barrage jumping from trench to trench and the defense being overwhelmed. But the troops engaged, stoutly as they fought, did not present a heavy enough mass of infantry to accomplish the full purpose; nor, as their advance spread out into an ever-deepening salient, had they sufficient reserves to defend the line they had won.

The general direction of the attack was northeast, in the direction of Cambrai across the Scheldt Canal between Masnieres and Cantaing and through Marcoing; and north along the Canal du Nord with the commanding heights of Bourlon Wood as an early objective. Three possibilities were present. One was the unlimited; that is to say, such a surprise might be effected that the Boche would be rolled back a considerable distance. The second was that the Hindenburg Support line (*i.e.,* the Marcoing line) might be captured and consolidated. And the third, more limited in scope, was for a raid on a glorified scale, capturing trenches and inflicting considerable loss upon the enemy. In its result what was actually achieved lay somewhere between the second and third possibilities.

At first everything, as we have seen, went according to programme. On the right good progress was made, our troops at one point establishing themselves across the Scheldt Canal. But in the centre we were hung up for vital hours in front of Flesquieres. On the left the attack went better, being pushed forward astride the Canal du Nord to the Bapaume-Arras road.

But the advance, considerable though it was, had not gone so far and fast as had been hoped. The enemy brought up great masses of reserves, and was able to hold the Masnieres line. No opportunity had been furnished the cavalry to break through—though, as has been previously noted, one squadron of the Fort Garry Horse actually crossed the Scheldt Canal. Nevertheless the local success of the first two days was great, the attack reaching the line of the Scheldt, Cantaing, Anneux and Moeuvres.

It is possible enough that left to his own judgment Sir Julian Byng would have been content to consolidate this position, offering as it did a favorable line as a future jumping-off ground. But on Nov. 23 Sir Douglas Haig, no doubt anxious to exploit as far as possible such a striking success, ordered that Bourlon Wood be attacked from the south. The tired troops again went forward and stormed the wood. There followed five or six days fighting of a ding-dong nature, with varying fortunes, during which the wood changed hands several times. We seized but failed to hold the village of Fontaine-Notre-Dame, which then established itself a tactical feature of first importance to any force consolidating itself in Bourlon Wood.

Every student of the war will remember the thrill of pride and hope of Nov. 20, 1917, and the following days; how at last a ray of light seemed to have penetrated those dark months; how the news was hailed with joy in every allied capital and with corresponding foreboding in enemy countries; but how, after ten days heroic effort, the storm broke upon the weary but devoted troops, when five or six fresh enemy divisions burst up the Banteux Valley, capturing Gonnelieu and pushing in to Gouzeaucourt. Only the extraordinary gallantry and tenacity of some of the divisions engaged, especially the Guards, the 2nd., and the 47th. and 56th. Divisions, prevented a disaster.

These three divisions held the Bourlon Wood line against eight enemy divisions altogether, five in the frontal attack and three in reserve. They held on throughout the day. In some

places the enemy drove in seven distinct attacks, but not one of them reached our main line, although forward posts changed hands. The great slaughter the enemy suffered there was at that time regarded the most serious he had had in the war.

As it turned out, the success, limited though it was, proved of very great strategic value at a critical time. The enemy was thrown out of his stride for the rest of the year. Tactically, too, the Third Army had the best of it. The Hindenburg line south of Moeuvres was not only captured but held. They suffered indeed 42,000 casualties in the fortnight's battle, losing 7,800 prisoners. But on the other hand they inflicted casualties estimated at 80,000, capturing 11,000 prisoners and 170 guns, though against these must be set the 150 guns the enemy captured on Nov. 30. But he used up in the battle 30 divisions against the 11 British divisions engaged, and many of these were either brought down from the north or deflected from Italy.

Altogether, disappointing as the final result might have been, the battle was a real victory. Had the Third Army been permitted to embark on it with the support requested, including the Canadian Corps, and at a time of year when the days were long, it is pretty certain that the highest expectations of Sir Julian Byng would have been realized. As it was, laboring under every disadvantage, the soundness of his tactical theory not only proved itself, but has served as the model for all future operations on the grand scale.

CHAPTER III

THE PLAN OF ATTACK

THE problem of the Canadian Corps was entirely different. In front of us, across the canal, lay the high ground from which Sir Julian Byng's men had been beaten back. But the weakness of his position had not developed from failure to push home those attacks. It came from the increasing exposed flank his drive north created for an active enemy east of the Scheldt Canal.

On the other hand, provided we could cross the Canal du Nord, overwhelm the enemy defense on the opposing slope and seize the high ground, we should have attained a position not only practical for defense but commanding the valley of the Scheldt and the city of Cambrai lying within it. Once established on the high ground north of the city beyond the Marcoing line, and its fall must come about inevitably, without the necessity of storming it, which would have involved not only heavy casualties for ourselves, but must have resulted in its partial destruction, from every point of view to be avoided so far as possible.

But to carry out this operation successfully, it was essential that our drive, necessarily of the spearhead type, be assured, first, a degree of protection along its exposed left flank; and, second, that there must be adequate support by troops operating immediately on our right so as to prevent the creation of an equally vulnerable right flank. On the left, therefore, any plan of attack must include the mopping-up of the whole peninsula east of the Canal du Nord and south of the Sensee, thus placing that river between us and the enemy's army based on Douai. But on the right all that was necessary was that as our line advanced north of Cambrai, the ground should be cleared as far east as the Scheldt Canal.

We have seen how the Corps Commander declined to commit his troops to a frontal attack on the Canal du Nord from the area we were holding throughout September north of Sains-lez-Marquion, where the flooded condition of the canal and the high banks opposing us denied success, and how he submitted an alternative plan. That plan is best explained in his own words, as follows:—

"On Sept. 15 I received the details of a large operation to be carried out later in the month by the Third and Fourth Armies, in which the Canadian Corps was to co-operate by crossing the Canal, and by capturing Bourlon Wood and the high ground to the northeast of it, to protect the left flank of the attack.

"The XXII Corps on the left was to take over the front held by the Canadian Corps to a point 1,200 yards north of the Arras-Cambrai Road, and the Canadian Corps was to take over part of the front held by the XVII Corps (Third Army) as far as Moeuvres (exclusive), which was to be the Canadian Corps right boundary for the attack.

"By this side-slip to the south the right of the Canadian Corps was to be placed opposite a dry portion of the Canal du Nord on a front of about 2,500 yards. The Germans were then holding in strength a strip of ground on the west side of the canal, and every effort made by the XVII Corps to clear this ground and reach the Canal banks had been repulsed.

"On Sept. 22 the task of the Corps was enlarged so as to include, in addition to the objectives already mentioned, the capture of the bridges over the Scheldt Canal, north of Cambrai, and the high ground overlooking the Sensee Valley. The right boundary was not altered. To assist in carrying out the above additional task, the 11th. British Division and the 7th. Tank Battalion were placed under my orders.

"The date of this operation was definitely fixed for Sept. 27, 1918, at dawn.

"It was decided that the 4th. and 1st. Canadian Divisions would carry out the initial attack, capture the villages of

Bourlon and Marquion respectively, and immediately thereafter seize Bourlon Wood and east of Bois-de-Cocret and Dartford Wood.

"At this stage the 3rd. Canadian Division would pass through the right of the 4th. Canadian Division and advance from the line east of Bourlon Wood in an easterly direction towards Neuville-St. Remy, in liaison with the XVII Corps.

"The 11th. Division was to come up on the left of the 1st. Canadian Division and advance in a northeasterly direction toward Epinoy and Oisy-le-Verger. The 4th. Canadian Division on the right centre was to advance towards Blecourt and the 1st. Canadian Division on the left centre was to advance in the direction of Abancourt.

"This attack was fraught with difficulties. On the Corps battlefront of 6,400 yards the Canal du Nord was impassable on the northern 3,800 yards. The Corps had, therefore, to cross the Canal du Nord on a front of 2,600 yards, and to expand later fanwise in a northeasterly direction to a front exceeding 15,000 yards. This intricate manœuvre called for most skilful leadership on the part of commanders, and the highest state of discipline on the part of the troops.

"The assembly of the attacking troops in an extremely congested area known by the enemy to be the only one available was very dangerous, especially in view of the alertness of the enemy. A concentrated bombardment of this area prior to "zero," particularly if gas was employed, was a dreaded possibility which could seriously affect the whole of the operation and possibly cause its total failure.

"To meet such an eventuality careful arrangements were made by the counter-battery staff officer to bring to bear a specially heavy neutralizing fire on hostile batteries at any moment during the crucial period of preparation. These arrangements were to be put into effect, in any case, at "zero" hour, to neutralize the hostile defensive barrage on the front of attack.

"With the exception of the 2nd. Canadian Division, which

was now holding the entire front and would be in Corps Reserve at the time of attack, every resource of the Canadian Corps was to be crowded in that narrow space.

"The provision of an effective Artillery barrage presented considerable difficulty owing to the depth of the attack and its general direction. On the 4th. Canadian Division front particularly, the depth to the initial objective was such that the batteries were compelled to move forward into captured ground and continue firing the barrage from these new positions. Provision was made for the advance of a number of batteries with their Echelons to the Canal line and beyond whilst the attack was in progress.

"A large number of Machine-Gun batteries were detailed to supply the initial barrage and, later, to advance in support of the Infantry.

"Provisions were also made for Engineer Units to move forward immediately following the assaulting troops, to effect immediate repair to the roads and crossings of the Canal in order to enable the Artillery to move up in support of the Infantry.

"The greatest precautions had been taken to ensure secrecy, and camouflage had been used extensively to prevent detection of the preparations of all kinds that were in progress.

"Further to conceal our intentions, it was decided that no preliminary fighting to secure a jumping-off line would take place, and that the Germans would be left in possession of their positions west of the Canal until the hour of the attack. It was also hoped that, by letting the Germans retain this ground, their defensive barrage would remain well west of the Canal instead of being placed on the Canal itself, where the banks offered a serious obstacle and reduced very considerably the rate of advance of the assaulting troops.

"On our right the XVII Corps was to advance and capture Fontaine-Notre-Dame, in conjunction with the capture of Bourlon Wood by the 4th. Canadian Division.

"On the night of Sept. 25-26 the XXII Corps on the left

took over the front as far south as the Arras-Cambrai road, and arranged to extend the Artillery and Machine-Gun barrage to their front so as to deceive the enemy regarding actual flanks of the attack.

"The 4th. and 1st. Canadian Divisions went into the line on their respective battlefronts.

"The 2nd. Canadian Division, on completion of the relief, passed into Corps Reserve.

"During the night of Sept. 26-27 all final adjustments and moves were made, and everything was ready before "zero" hour.

"This was for everybody a night full of anxiety, but apart from the usual harassing fire and night bombing nothing untoward happened."

Before proceeding to the attack itself, a review of the general strategic plan of which it formed so vital a part, is not out of place. The Fourth and Third British Armies were about to launch a frontal attack on the Hindenburg System, hitherto unbroken, from St. Quentin north to Cambrai. It was to be the honorable function of the Canadian Corps, having already passed through the Hindenburg line west of the Canal du Nord, to press forward on the extreme left of this general attack and thus turn the Hindenburg System from the north. Its task was not so much to capture Cambrai—which in fact was outside our southern boundary—as to drive forward along the northern bank of the Scheldt and thus compromise enemy communications north and south.

In our opening chapter sufficient extracts were made from Sir Douglas Haig's Victory Dispatch to outline the general plan. We may now with advantage follow him again:—"The details of the strategic plan . . upon which future operations should be based were the subject of careful discussion between Marshal Foch and myself. Preparations were already far advanced for the successful attack by which, on Sept. 12, the First American Army, assisted by certain French Divisions, drove the enemy from the St. Mihiel salient and inflicted

heavy losses upon him in prisoners and guns. Ultimately, it was decided that as soon as possible after this attack four convergent and simultaneous offensives should be launched by the Allies as follows:—

"By the Americans west of Mezieres;

"By the French west of Argonne in close co-operation with the American attack and with the same general objectives;

"By the British on the St. Quentin-Cambrai front in the general direction of Maubeuge;

"By the Belgian and Allied forces in Flanders in the direction of Ghent.

"By these attacks, it was expected, as already indicated, that the important German forces opposite the French and Americans would be pressed back upon the difficult country of the Ardennes, while the British thrust struck at their principal lines of communication. It was intended to take advantage of the weakening of the German forces on this front to clear the Belgian coast by a surprise attack. Success in any one of these offensives might compel the enemy to withdraw to the line of the Meuse.

"The results to be obtained from these different attacks depended in a peculiarly large degree upon the British attack in the centre. It was here that the enemy's defenses were most highly organized. If these were broken, the threat directed at his vital systems of lateral communication would of necessity react upon his defenses elsewhere.

"On the other hand, the long period of sustained offensive action through which the British Armies had already passed had made large demands both upon the troops themselves and upon my available reserves. Throughout our attacks from Aug. 8 onwards our losses in proportion to the results achieved and the prisoners taken had been consistently and remarkably small. In the aggregate, however, they were considerable, and in the face of them an attack upon so formidably organized a position as that which now confronted us could not be lightly undertaken. Moreover, the political effects of an unsuccessful

attack upon a position so well known as the Hindenburg line would be large, and would go far to revive the declining morale not only of the German Army but of the German people.

"These different considerations were present to my mind. The probable results of a costly failure, or, indeed, of anything short of a decided success, in any attempt upon the main defenses of the Hindenburg line were obvious; but I was convinced that the British attack was the essential part of the general scheme and that the moment was favorable.

"Accordingly I decided to proceed with the attack, and all preparatory measures, including the preliminary operations already recounted, were carried out as rapidly and as thoroughly as possible."

He then proceeds to describe the difficulties of the task confronting the Fourth and Third Armies, continuing:—"The Battle of Cambrai, which on Oct. 5 culminated in the capture of the last remaining sectors of the Hindenburg line, was commenced by the First and Third Armies.

"Between the neighbourhood of St. Quentin and the Scheldt, the Fourth, Third and First Armies in the order named occupied on the evening of Sept. 26 a line running from the village of Selency (west of St. Quentin) to Gricourt and Pontruct, and thence east of Villeret and Lempire to Villers-Guislain and Gouzeaucourt, both exclusive. Thereafter the line continued northwards to Havrincourt and Moeuvres and thence along the west side of the Canal du Nord to the floods of the Sensee at Ecourt St. Quentin.

"On the First and Third Army fronts strong positions covering the approaches to Cambrai between the Nord and Scheldt canals, including the section of the Hindenburg line itself north of Gouzeaucourt, were still in the enemy's possession. His trenches in this sector faced southwest, and it was desirable that they should be taken in the early stages of the operation, so as to render it easier for the artillery of the Fourth Army to get into position. On the Fourth Army front,

where the heaviest blow was to fall, the exceptional strength of the enemy's position made a prolonged bombardment necessary. I therefore decided that a very heavy bombardment, opened during the night of Sept. 26-27 along the whole front of all three Armies, should be followed on the morning of Sept 27 by an attack delivered by the First and Third Armies. In this way the enemy might be deceived as to the main point of the attack, the First and Third Armies would be enabled to get nearer to their final objective, and the task of the Fourth Army artillery would be simplified.

"On the morning of Sept. 26 French and American forces attacked on both sides of the Argonne, between the Meuse and Suippe rivers.

"At 5.20 a.m. on Sept. 27 the Third and First British Armies attacked with the IV, VI, XVII and Canadian Corps in the direction of Cambrai on a front of about 13 miles from Gouzeaucourt to the neighborhood of Sauchy Lestree. The success of the northern part of the attack depended upon the ability of our troops to debouch from the neighborhood of Moeuvres, and to secure the crossings of the Canal du Nord in that locality. The northern portion of the Canal du Nord was too formidable an obstacle to be crossed in the face of the enemy. It was therefore necessary for the attacking divisions to force a passage on a comparatively narrow front about Moeuvres, and thereafter turn the line of the canal farther north by a divergent attack developed fanwise from the point of crossing. This difficult manœuvre was carried out successfully, and on the whole front of our attack our infantry, assisted by some 65 tanks, broke deeply into the enemy's position."

This testimony to the work of the Canadian Corps from so high a quarter is very satisfactory, though it was Inchy and not Mœuvres that furnished the jumping-off spot. As has been explained, this difficult manœuvre had originated in the brain of the Canadian Corps Commander. It was a daring plan that success alone could justify. Every commanding officer in the Corps to whom the secret had been entrusted was well

aware of that. Thus, the narrative of the 1st. Canadian Division, after an appreciation of the general strategic situation, says:—"The battle was divided into three main phases:

"First, on the left, the storming of the Canal du Nord and the advance on Cambrai; followed immediately by the second phase, the great blow which shattered the Hindenburg line and outflanked the defenses of St. Quentin; and, third, came the general attack on the whole front which resulted in the capture of Cambrai and St. Quentin, and forced the enemy to retire behind the line of the river Selle.

"It was in the first phase of this battle that the Canadian Corps was chiefly interested, for to the Corps was given the task of forcing the Canal du Nord, capturing Bourlon Wood and the high ground to the north of it, and then advancing on Cambrai and seizing the crossings of the Scheldt Canal and the Sensee river to the east and north of that city. This would afford complete protection for the main attack to the south—and this was the real objective of the Canadian Corps. . .

"The attack presented many unusual features. In the first place the Canal du Nord was passable on the Corps sector on a front of 2,500 yards only. This meant that four divisions had to be got through this narrow 'defile,' and in addition there were engineers, artillery, machine-gunners and all the supply trains of various descriptions. To add to these difficulties the canal had to be bridged in many places, especially to permit the passage of guns and limbers. . .

"At the very outset, therefore, the success of the battle devolved upon the Engineers. While the infantry, under cover of the artillery barrage, might carry the canal in the first rush, it was essential that guns and ammunition be brought forward across the canal as soon as possible. To do this bridges were a necessity. The task set the Engineers was of vital importance."

The plan, of course, was confided to the Army Commanders. Sir Julian Byng, as has been seen, was in command of the Third Army on our right, and on one of these September days

he came over to Corps Headquarters at Neuville Vitasse to talk it over with Sir Arthur Currie. Mutual confidence and esteem existed between the past and present Canadian Corps Commanders. Sir Julian could speak with peculiar authority, for no one knew this battlefield so intimately, had studied it to such good purpose, nor could more fully appreciate its dangers and difficulties. He had heard, he said, of the proposed plan of attack, and as an old friend he could not refrain from pointing out its hazards. Did Sir Arthur Currie think he could really carry out the operation, because in his opinion the Canadian Corps was attempting the most difficult manœuvre yet attempted on a battlefield in this war?

They discussed the plan in detail, and Sir Julian went away, if not convinced, at least immensely struck by its audacity and brilliance.

CHAPTER IV

MARCHING UP TO BATTLE

WE come to the evening of Thursday, Sept. 26, the feast of St. Cyprian. Our valley east of Neuville Vitasse is now crowded with troops. On many occasions during the past four years men have massed here; friend or enemy, for attack or defense; but never have they been so thickly, so openly congregated. Nor will they be again, one may hazard, so long as history is in the making.

But, until nightfall, there is little sign on the surface. No place in the world is so empty as No Man's Land. It is populated only as is a desert plain by an advancing horde of locusts. They pass over, stripping every green thing as they go, and leave it even more waste than it was before. One recalls a little scene on the plateau just to the north a month ago.

It was in the early afternoon, very hot and not a sign of life, except that shells were bursting around Monchy-le-Preux and a tremendous uproar was in progress over the slope to the northeast, where the gray fog of our barrage was fast blotting out the dark outlines of Sart Wood. But not a sign of life.

Suddenly a shrill whistle, and immediately men in kilts, covered with khaki aprons, begin tumbling up, literally, from the bowels of the earth; from unexpected and unseen mouths of dug-outs, so cunningly contrived by their late occupants, the Boche, that they are quite unnoticeable even a few yards away, for they lie flush with the ground, with no betraying litter of excavation.

They stumble up awkwardly, for they are laden down with their kit. The roll is called, a brief order, and they trudge off toward the smoke and the uproar—an extraordinary prosaic business. In a few minutes the little plateau is as empty again

as a warren after the drumming alarm has sent the conies scurrying to cover. But presently a flare goes up from the wood.

Then it was the matter of a platoon, moving up from support into line. Now it is battalions, brigades, whole divisions, for the Corps is marching up to the great assault on the Canal du Nord. The days are growing short; the sun sets by six o'clock, and an hour after it is dark. In the gloaming is a scene of bustle and ordered confusion. The men laden down for the battle, stand by in companies, waiting the word. A great concentration of artillery is going forward and engineer trains are pushing up with pontoons and bridging material, steel and heavy timber.

It has been our good fortune to dine—if such may be termed the hasty meal in a bomb-proof shelter—with the headquarters of a battalion whose adjutant is a particular friend. This battalion is to move into support and next day its objective is Bourlon Wood. We gladly accept an invitation to march up some way with it.

It is a long and tedious march of some dozen miles over secondary roads and traversing ridge after ridge. The movement is diagonal, because we pass southeast out of our own area into that of the Corps on our right to the jumping-off line astride Inchy-en-Artois. The men whistle and sing, in the best of spirits. They march by companies in column of four, strung out over the white road—tramp, tramp, tramp, under a starlit sky. They march through the ghostly outlines of Wancourt, over a plank road our engineers have built across the Cojeul, and so up the steep climb of Wancourt Ridge. Here the Colonel, who is riding ahead, orders a halt, and the men have a ten-minute rest. They line the roadside, lighting cigarettes and chaffing one another.

On the left the Arras-Cambrai road around Vis-en-Artois is being straafed by distant enemy batteries, and occasionally he turns a searching fire on our battery positions. But it is nothing more than normal. Some bombing is going on

north of the Scarpe, but it is too dark for effective work, or our marching units would offer a conspicuous target. The night is mild with a southwest wind. The moon, entering its last quarter, a late riser, is hidden by scudding cloud. We watch the battalion march by, a fine sight, for it has been recruited up to strength. Steaming cook kettles bring up the rear, with a hot meal ready for the men. Then we turn back, for we too must be getting to our appointed place.

It is after midnight when we start out. It has begun to rain, at first a drizzle and then a pitiless downpour, and it is pitch dark. But as we climb out of Cherisy on the road to Hendecourt, a stray enemy shell ignites one of our ammunition dumps and makes the going better. From Hendecourt the road runs over another ridge to Cagnicourt, whence it turns sharp south, past the Bois de Bouche, then southeast towards Inchy, becoming little better than a track. Midway and on the right are Henley Copse and Bois d'Inchy, on an elevation but two thousand yards from the village and commanding a view of the canal and battleground beyond.

This road is a quagmire, lined with trenches facing south, part of the Hindenburg Support line taken by us three weeks before. We are early and shelter for a time in a dripping dugout. Our troops, wearied by their long march, are crowded close in the trenches, in the woods, and behind the hill crests, with perhaps a tarpaulin stretched over their heads. But at four o'clock the rain stops and a clearing sky promises a fine day. We walk on to the little hill crowned by the Bois d'Inchy, where are some trenches and great variety of shell holes.

Two of our battalions lie in this little wood. The troops are packed very close, the attacking divisions being squeezed into a perilously narrow frontage, because the line of assault is confined to less than a mile and a half on either side of Inchy-en-Artois, which indeed is the boundary between our 4th. and 1st. Divisions. From where we stand the canal is but 3,000 yards away, and the Boche are holding this side of it, their line running due north from the northwest corner of

Mœuvres (taken recently by the XVII Corps), midway between Inchy and the canal to west of Sains-lez-Marquion. The first task of our infantry, therefore, is to overwhelm them and thus make good the west bank of the canal itself.

But the limited area is also restricted in depth. Close behind is a great concentration of artillery, which is about to lay down what for its limited area is the most intense barrage of the war. All the Canadian Corps artillery is here, with 700 rounds to each gun, as well as a large number of imperial "heavies." The attack offers an extraordinary difficult problem. In the first place the character of the initial barrage is in itself unique, for it is not the usual straight-away affair. Covering first the actual crossing of the Canal du Nord, it is designed then to protect the advance of the infantry on Bourlon Wood on the one hand, while on the other it is to fan out in a wide sweep to the north until finally it shall return from the east on to the east bank of the canal, pinning in by its arc the enemy garrison holding that side of the canal as far north as Oisy-le-Verger.

But that description hardly succeeds. It is more than that. The intention is that our 1st. Division, after crossing the canal, shall swing off first northeast, then north, and gradually close back on to the east side of the canal, thus taking from the rear the enemy garrison whose position from frontal attack, west of the canal, as has been before explained, is impregnable. To provide a protective flank for this complicated operation a stationary barrage is to be laid down some little distance east of and parallel to the canal. As the sweep of the infantry develops, a creeping barrage is to advance from south to north between the canal and this stationary barrage, the latter being lifted step by step as it is reached. It is extraordinarily ingenious and intricate, to be understood best by reference to the barrage map itself.

Starting with a barrage 3,000 yards in width, it is to fan out to 9,000 yards, changing form as it goes, and the least error in synchronization by either gunners or infantry must result in

disaster to our own men. This calls for an unprecedented concentration of artillery in a restricted area, a little arc back of Inchy, so hazardous in itself that should the enemy discover it, and lay down a counter-barrage on these massed batteries, they must be wiped out; and yet it is a risk in all its gravity essential if the daring tactical manœuvre as a whole is to have any prospect of success.

In order to give our troops room to deploy for the attack it is necessary to leave them a clear space of 2,000 yards deep west of the enemy line, and our battery positions are therefore just that much further from the canal line. If adequate support is to be given our men as they advance up the long slope against Bourlon Wood, our batteries must crowd down as close as possible to the canal so soon as its line is secure. From the canal our field batteries can command a range to the extreme limit of Bourlon Wood.

In order to accomplish this a novel device has been determined upon and worked out in detail. This has been styled an "extension barrage." Four brigades of our field batteries are all limbered up, and at "zero" hour go off on the heels of the infantry. By six o'clock, forty minutes after the battle opens, these are actually in position on the west side of the canal, an hour ago in the enemy's hands. They thus extend the effective range from the kick-off line from 6,500 to 8,500 yards, and as a back battery goes out of action through exhaustion of its effective range, its area of fire is taken over by one of these front batteries, and then it too comes up to the canal bank. This manœuvre is made possible by the very effective smoke barrage we lay down to screen enemy observation from Bourlon Wood.

But the final objective lies considerably east of Bourlon Wood, and it therefore becomes the imperative task of our engineers to push practical crossings over the canal so that the guns can follow up the infantry. Three hours was the utmost they could be allowed for this task. For without efficient artillery support, our attacking lines are apt to be driven back

down the slope, and in the final analysis the success of the operation devolves upon the engineers.

But more even was required from the artillery than this intricate and fanlike barrage. Enemy counter-barrage work must be smothered, and for this purpose a great concentration of "heavies" was provided both of our own and Imperial batteries. For three weeks our artillery observation 'planes had been spotting the enemy's battery positions, and it had been found that he was continually moving his batteries about, having in all 105 battery positions in front of our attack. In order to smother these by our counter-battery work it might be presumed it would be necessary to concentrate fire on every one of them, an impossible task. The problem was in fact and practice solved in a brilliant fashion. Immediately the battle opened our observers flew low over the enemy positions, reporting by wireless not where his batteries were, but what positions were empty, thus enabling our artillery to concentrate their fire on occupied positions only, with what success will be seen.

There are always tense minutes before "zero." It is a pregnant hour. But never more so than this morning, for we are packed so close that if the enemy is apprised of the attack and lays down a barrage our slaughter must be fearful. For several days he has been nervous. But our jumping-off line has been camouflaged by deliberately destroying his wire far to the north and south.

As the rain clears off the men make shift to get a meal. A tot of rum warms their chilled limbs. Mist still hangs low in the valley, but beyond the outline of the slope can be made out. Officers consult their maps and compasses and get their men to their jumping-off ground. Engineers are there with infantry floats. The men carry scaling ladders. All is ready, but the minutes are interminable.

At five o'clock there is a faint flutter of dawn in the east. Just then the enemy starts throwing up twin red balls of fire —the S.O.S. call he used in the Amiens show. But nothing

comes of it. At last, at twenty minutes past five of the morning of Friday, Sept. 27, the barrage opens. Some batteries are so close that the noise is stunning. Five minutes later the men push forward to secure the west side of the canal. The enemy, complete though is his surprise, pours in a heavy shell fire. This morning his S.O.S. signal is twin green balls, and soon his entire front line for miles north and south becomes twinkling green. He does not know where the main stroke is to fall.

Within a very short time the canal is crossed, our men scaling the locks, bombing as they go, and soon the battle is streaming away up the eastward slopes. Prisoners, captured this side of the canal, come in at once and testify to the complete surprise. They are from the 63rd. Naval Division and the First Prussian Guards Reserve Division. Big fellows these, but they do not look so terrible. We had been warned of them, for two days before enemy aircraft had dropped leaflets among our men:—"Spare this terrible bloodshed," one read. "It is time for peace, Canadians; you will be only slaughtered if you go against our terrible Guards." The entire staff of an enemy battery was captured before it had fired a shot.

One of our own gunners performed a wonderful exploit. Realizing how essential it was to get the guns up as near the canal as possible, Lt. H. H. Phinney of the 1st. Battery, C.F. A., made a personal reconnaissance along the canal over-night, and then under cover of darkness took his section of 18-pounders in front even of our outpost line. He lost half his horses and ammunition, but was able when "zero" struck to direct his fire on an enemy machine-gun position across the canal at point-blank range with open sights, destroying it entirely.

Canadian Engineers now work feverishly constructing bridges, and the work goes forward with a will. Before nine o'clock the first battery crosses the canal. Prior to this, Lt. J. A. Davin, of the 1st. Canadian Divisional Ammunition Column, immediately after "zero" and under heavy shell fire made a reconnaissance of the Canal du Nord in front of Inchy,

located a practical crossing, and by his persistance, disregard of danger and good leadership took over a column of wagons and established his A. R. P. 1,000 yards east of the canal, where he kept up a much needed supply of ammunition for the forward batteries until the bridges were built. Since Aug. 8, in every battle, this officer had thus pushed forward his ammunition dumps into the heart of the fighting.

Sergt. Chas. Glaysher, of the 1st. Canadian Division Signal Column, had the honor of taking the first vehicle over the canal. He established a report centre well east of the canal, laying wires under heavy fire to the Brigade and Batteries. His wireless aerials were shot down three times in half an hour but on each occasion he re-erected them himself.

Our smoke barrage has now blotted out the distant scene. At half past nine the tanks come back, their day's work done. About noon, clear above the smoke, a gold and silver shower goes up. It is the signal that Bourlon Wood is in our hands.

CHAPTER V

OPERATIONS: SEPT. 27

PREPARATIONS for this battle have been entered into at length because after all it was the plan and the arrangements for carrying it out that mattered; those perfected, as we have seen, and granted such an instrument as the Canadian Corps, efficiently supported by the veteran troops, ably commanded, of the 11th. British Division, and the battle itself, up to a certain stage at least, went according to programme. The different puzzle-parts, all carefully worked out beforehand, fell into their place in the picture until it presented a perfected example of the art of war. It was not until difficulties arose on our right flank that the scene became blurred, and for a time threatened to ruin the general effect.

Sir Arthur Currie thus describes the opening operations:—

"At 5.20 a.m., Sept. 27, the attack was successfully launched, and in spite of all obstacles went well from the first.

"The barrage was uniformly good, and the 3rd. and 4th. Canadian Divisional Artilleries, commanded respectively by Brig.-General J. S. Stewart and Brig.-General W. B. M. King, were successful in advancing into captured ground, and continued the barrage as planned.

"Early in the afternoon the First Phase of the attack was substantially over, and the readjustments of the fronts preparatory to the Second Phase were under way.

"On the extreme right, however, the XVII Corps had failed to keep pace with our advance, and our right flank, submitted to a severe enfilade machine-gun fire from the vicinity of Anneux, had to be refused for a considerable distance to retain touch with the left of the XVII Corps; therefore, the encircling movement which was to have given us Bourlon Wood could not be developed.

"Fully alive to the gravity of the situation which would be created on the flank of the Third Army by the failure to capture and hold Bourlon Wood, the 11th. Brigade (Brig.-General Odlum) of the 4th. Canadian Division attacked from the north side of the Wood and captured all the high ground, pushing patrols as far as Fontaine-Notre-Dame.

"It is recalled here that Bourlon Wood, which is 110 metres high, dominates the ground as far south as Flesquieres and Havrincourt; and that its loss after very heavy fighting in Nov., 1917, during the first battle of Cambrai, caused eventually the withdrawal of the Third Army from a large portion of the ground they had won by their surprise attack.

"A severe counter-attack launched from the direction of Raillencourt, against the left of the 4th. Canadian Division, was repulsed in the afternoon with heavy losses to the enemy.

"Owing to the situation on our right flank, already explained, the 3rd. Canadian Division could not be engaged this day. The 1st. Canadian Division and the 11th. (British) Division, however, made substantial gains after the commencement of the Second Phase, the former capturing Haynecourt and crossing the Douai-Cambrai road, and the latter pushing on and taking Epinoy and Oisy-le-Verger by evening."

To get a clear picture it is necessary to trace the Corps and Divisional boundaries. The southern boundary of the Canadian Corps, and therefore of our 4th. Division, was to start from the northwest corner of Mœuvres, and then run east 5,000 yards, trending a little south all the way, to a point midway between Anneux and Bourlon Wood. Thence it took a wide sweep, following the south and southeastern slope of the wood, to a point about 500 yards northwest of Fontaine-Notre-Dame.

Thence the Canadian Corps southern boundary ran in almost a direct line a little north of east to the Faubourg Cantimpre, skirting Cambrai on the far side of the Scheldt, but crossing over the canal at Neuville-St. Remy, north of the City. Thus not only Anneux and Fontaine-Notre-Dame, but

the line of the Scheldt Canal southwest of Cambrai, were left in the area of the XVII Corps.

The inter-divisional boundary between the 4th. Canadian Division, Maj.-General Sir David Watson, and the 3rd. Canadian Division, Maj.-General F. O. W. Loomis, started east from Inchy, and then trended off more to the northeast, passing through Pilgrim's Rest and following the general direction of Haynecourt. The northern boundary of the 1st. Canadian Division, Maj.-General Sir Archibald C. Macdonell, will be outlined when we come to a particular description of its operations. For the time being we will confine ourselves to the 4th. Division.

Draw a line from the point northwest of Fontaine-Notre-Dame described above, a little west of north to 500 yards east of Pilgrim's Rest, and we have the Third Objective of the 4th. Canadian Division, marking the end of the First Phase. At this point the 3rd. Canadian Division was designed to come up, taking over the southern half of the area of advance marked out for the Second Phase, roughly represented by the line from Neuville-St. Remy to Sancourt, both inclusive. The 4th. Division was to continue its advance on the left of the 3rd. Division, and therefore between the latter and the 1st. Division.

Owing to failure of the XVII Corps to come up on our right flank, this plan never matured. The 4th. Division could do no better than reach its Third Objective, from Fontaine-Notre-Dame to Pilgrim's Rest, and the opportunity for further exploitation northwest of Cambrai by the 3rd. Division was thus denied on the opening day. Better fortune attended the 1st. Canadian Division, finely supported by the 11th. British Division, a deep salient being pushed into the enemy defense through Haynecourt and between Sancourt and Epinoy.

On the 4th. Divisional front the 10th. Brigade, Brig.-General R. J. F. Hayter, was entrusted with the storming of the canal. The attacking units had been highly organized for the work and the men went at it with a zip. The 50th. Battalion, of Calgary, on the right and the 46th. Battalion, of Regina, on

the left—the latter being in contact with the 4th. Battalion, Central Ontario, of the 1st. Division—jumped off at five minutes past "zero" and carried the enemy line on the west side of the canal in their first rush. Fixing their scaling-ladders, the 46th. climbed down into the dry bed of lock No. 4, where the garrison was bombed into surrender, and the advance continued unchecked.

The 44th. Battalion, New Brunswick, and 47th. Battalion, Western Ontario, of the same brigade, now came up in support. So soon as the canal was crossed, our troops, under cover of a very efficient smoke barrage, rushed the Canal du Nord trench system and then advanced up the slope to their first objective, the Marquion line.

A pause was here made for fifty minutes, when the attack was carried on by the 11th. Brigade on the right, and the 12th. Brigade on the left, until the second objective was secured, this being a line just west of Bourlon Wood but also including Bourlon village, stormed by the 12th. Brigade. Owing to the difficulties of the ground, no tanks got up here, though several were employed further north by the 1st. Division, and the infantry depended on the barrage and their own exertions.

No sooner had the 11th. Brigade on our extreme right reached the Marquion line than it became subject to a very heavy enfilade fire from its right flank, owing to failure of neighboring Imperial troops to take their objectives, as they were held up in front of the formidable Hindenburg Support line. Particularly galling machine-gun fire came from the factory on the Bapaume-Cambrai road just east of this support line, which here takes a bend south. This inflicted many casualties, and the 11th. Brigade already was obliged to detach elements to form a flank in this direction. As it advanced to its objective of Bourlon Wood, it offered a more and more exposed flank, into which the enemy poured a heavy artillery and machine-gun fire, and launched a number of counter-attacks from the southeast. The 102nd. Battalion, British Columbia, was forced to swing south a thousand yards outside the

Canadian Corps area, taking the strongly-fortified factory on the Bapaume-Cambrai road.

The 11th. Brigade lost very heavily, chiefly from machine-gun fire, but pushed steadily on. Reaching their second objective, immediately in front of Bourlon Wood, the brigade held a line with on the right the 102nd. Battalion, in the centre the 54th. Battalion, of the Kootenay, and on the left, towards Bourlon village, the 87th. Battalion, Grenadier Guards of Montreal. The 75th. Battalion, recruited from the Missisauga Horse, of Toronto, was in reserve, but pressure was so great on the right flank that it was brought up in support of the 102nd., the battle headquarters of both battalions being established together 1,000 yards west of Bourlon Wood. Inside of half an hour an enemy 5.9-inch shell made a direct hit on the combined headquarters, Lt.-Col. F. Lister of the 102nd. being badly wounded, as well as his adjutant, while the battalion signal officer was killed. The adjutant of the 75th. was wounded and its signal officer also killed, and four or five other battalion officers became casualties, as did four officers of the British Divisional staff on our right who had come up to see how the battle was going. The same shell killed or wounded a number of signallers and runners.

The command of these two battalions now devolved upon Lt.-Col. Thompson, of the Canadian Engineers, who had joined the 75th. Battalion over night, having been recalled from London for that purpose just as he was about to sail for Canada on leave.

The 54th. Battalion on the immediate left fared equally badly, for a single shell wounded Lt.-Col. A. B. Carey, killed Major McDermott, Capt. Garland Foster, the adjutant, and Capt McQuarrie, while two other officers were wounded. This and the fighting of the succeeding days took very heavy toll of our battalion officers, several units losing their first and second officers in command, and company leaders right down to the subalterns.

After the disaster referred to above, Lt.-Col. Thompson

moved his headquarters to the top of the hill. In the meantime the 54th. had made a frontal attack on Bourlon Wood and got through to its eastern slope. Here they were strongly counter-attacked, and came under a very heavy enfilade fire from Fontaine-Notre-Dame, and therefore sent back for further assistance. Lt.-Col. Thompson detached two of the companies of the 75th. in support, and these came under orders of Col. Carey, whose wound was slight, enabling him to carry on his command.

The remaining companies of the 75th. were held in reserve, though exposed to very heavy fire, while the 102nd. worked along the south and east of the wood, seeking to join hands with the 54th., but were prevented by the commanding position the enemy held at Fontaine-Notre-Dame. From here enemy machine-gunners trickled back into the southeast corner of the wood and inflicted heavy loss on our men clinging to its southern outskirts, and the third company of the 75th. was therefore sent up to form a defensive flank. During the course of the afternoon and the evening the 102nd. beat back successive counter-attacks thrown in from the direction of Cantaing, 2,000 yards to the southeast.

About midnight information was received from headquarters of the 11th. Brigade that some of the enemy had re-established themselves in Bourlon Wood. As the 3rd. Canadian Division was to jump off at dawn from a line east of the wood—the third objective of Sept. 27—it became vitally important to protect their rear by clearing out these enemy elements. So the last remaining company of the 75th. Battalion was sent in to drive them out and establish a defensive flank against Fontaine-Notre-Dame. Groping their way forward in the pitch dark, bombing as they went, and more than once coming to close grips with cold steel, this company accomplished its difficult task well before dawn broke, and Bourlon Wood was at last finally in our hands.

While this was going on the 87th. Battalion had cleared the southwest corner of the wood and held it throughout the

day. At night the Battalion attacked again with the object of driving back the enemy into Fontaine-Notre-Dame, and this was the scene of a very gallant exploit on part of Lt. E. M. Preston, who, realizing that his platoon was under very heavy machine-gun fire from the railway embankment to the east, and that unless this was silenced the entire advance must be held up, called for two volunteers. Though under continual heavy fire, directed by flares the enemy threw up, they crawled on their hands and knees until they got within bombing distance of the enemy post. Ordering his men to throw their bombs, Lt. Preston rushed the post, killing or capturing the garrison, and sending back word that the advance could go on.

On the left of the 11th. Brigade, the 12th. Brigade, after storming the stoutly held village of Bourlon, passed on up the high ground, their right penetrating Bourlon Wood from the north, while their left established contact with the 1st. Canadian Division at Pilgrim's Rest.

The 12th. Brigade did not achieve this success without very hard fighting all day, and especially during the afternoon, when as its elements were fighting their way up on the high ground through wire and concrete machine-gun posts, the enemy counter-attacked time after time, but was always beaten back. This Brigade suffered too from the exposed right flank, but the men clung stubbornly to the ground they held, exposed though it was to heavy fire from Raillencourt in front and from all along the Marcoing line as far south as the Bapaume-Cambrai road. All its battalions were engaged during the day, these being the 38th., of Ottawa, 72nd., Seaforth Highlanders of Vancouver, 78th., of Winnipeg, and 85th., of Nova Scotia.

The position then on the night of Sept. 27-28, so far as our right was concerned, was that it held a semi-circular position from southwest of Bourlon Wood, along its base to the east, west of Fontaine-Notre-Dame, and thence running north to a little east of Pilgrim's Rest. Around this whole area the enemy's fire was concentrated, every foot of ground held being raked from one or more directions. Losses of the troops en-

gaged, especially of the 11th. Brigade, were very heavy. None but troops of the first class could thus have not only stood their ground but consolidated the position under cover of night. To a certain extent the plan had miscarried, but this was because of events over which the Canadian Corps could exercise no control. It went amiss through lack of support on our right, but notwithstanding this the gain had been very substantial, and in Bourlon Wood we held the key to the defenses of Cambrai.

Before proceeding to an account of what was going on in the northern area of the Corps, a detailed account of the wonderful work of the Canadian Engineers will contribute to a better view of the battle as a whole.

The engineer preparations for the operation were undertaken at five days' notice, and were exceedingly difficult owing to the nature of the ground. The problem involved the repair of roads demolished by shell fire; the building of cross-country tracks for infantry and horse transport to the front line; the pushing forward of light tramways to the front line to facilitate the delivery of ammunition, stores and supplies; the provision of engineer material of all sorts and the construction of new headquarters for battalions, brigades, divisions, etc., and dug-out accommodation and shelter for the troops as quickly as they could be improvised. A difficult question was the provision of water supply for the large number of horses, approximately 40,000, assembled in a very congested area.

The great problem was to get the infantry and the guns over the canal in the face of the enemy barrage, and to provide sufficient facilities in the way of roads, bridges and tramways as would ensure the supply of ammunition for the artillery being sustained, and the supply of munitions, stores and rations for the large number of troops engaged.

As it was clear that the enemy's barrage would fall naturally on the canal and be maintained there, the following were provided for: Seven infantry footbridges of an unsinkable type; ten crossings for guns and horse transport, five of which

had to be developed at once for heavy traffic even while the continuous stream of guns and ammunition wagons was pouring over them. At least ten times Canadian Engineer officers, flying at a height of about 500 feet, and subjected to heavy fire, traversed the length of the canal involved, reconnoitering for the best spots for tank crossings, bridge sites and infantry crossings.

Such was the preparation. Following were the results: Before "zero" hour 18 miles of roads had been repaired up to the front lines and seven miles of tramways constructed. On these tramways over 3,000 tons of ammunition per day were being delivered to advanced dumps and battery positions. The huge concentration of horses was provided with the necessary water supply.

After "zero" all crossings were put through successfully in spite of heavy artillery and machine-gun fire, the first guns crossing the canal at 8.40 a.m. The engineers went over with the infantry to get their footbridges across and the engineer wagons with their six-horse teams were pushed forward so rapidly that in several cases all the horses were killed by machine-gun fire and the men got their material down to the bridge sites by man-handling the wagons.

In one case a party of Boche machine-gunners, who had been overlooked by the mopping-up parties, emerged from a concealed tunnel and attacked the engineer party attempting to bridge the canal. The engineer officer in charge took part of his men and beat off the attack and at the same time kept the work of construction going without interruption.

The bridges constructed were of all types; pontoon, trestle, heavy pontoon and heavy steel bridges for all traffic. A remarkable record was made in the erection of two heavy steel bridges of 110 feet span under heavy fire. The materials were got on the sites at two o'clock in the afternoon, and the approaches prepared and the bridges erected in 12 hours actual work.

By early afternoon three new pumping installations had

been established on captured ground with sufficient horse troughs to water 5,000 horses an hour. All materials were got forward to the infantry and the positions gained consolidated. About three miles of tramways had been constructed and were in operation, and over 1,000 of our wounded were evacuated on returning ammunition trains operated by Canadian Corps Tramways.

The battle of the Canal du Nord was an Engineers' battle. The success of the whole operation depended upon the speed with which the crossings of the canal were provided, and the way in which they were repaired and improved during the day, so as to enable the guns and infantry to be maintained in the positions reached in their advance. The re-organization the previous spring of the Canadian Engineers was thus fully justified, and in the open warfare now about to open, the value of their work became ever increasingly apparent.

CHAPTER VI

OPERATIONS: SEPT. 27.—CONTINUED

NO better account of the operations on Sept. 27 of the 1st. Canadian Division is available than its divisional narrative, already quoted so extensively. While the difficulties of an exposed flank did not present themselves to the same extent as were faced by the 4th. Division, this Division was given a task so intricate in execution that the carrying of it out to the letter must ever be a justifiable source of pride for members of the famous "Old Red Patch."

"The Boundary," says this narrative, "between the 4th. and 1st. Divisions for the First Phase ran due east of Inchy, just north of Quarry Wood, then, swinging slightly to the left, it ran from 1,000 to 1,500 yards of Bourlon. The 1st. Division left boundary was the Canal du Nord.

"The 1st. Canadian Division, then, had to cross the Canal du Nord, seize the high ground to the north of Bourlon Wood and "mop up" the valley of the canal as far north as the village of Sauchee Lestree. Then, in the Second Phase of the battle, it was to capture Haynecourt and the high ground north and east of that village.

"The 1st. Division, therefore, in the First Phase of the battle, had to attack from a front of 1,100 yards, gradually extend this front until it became 6,000 yards when the final objective was reached, and advance over 6,000 yards.

"The Divisional Commander decided to make the initial attack with the 1st. Brigade on the right and the 3rd. Brigade on the left. When the general line, Bourlon-Marquion, was reached, the 2nd. Brigade would enter the fight between the 1st. and 3rd. Brigades, and would carry the battle right through the Second Phase to the capture of Haynecourt and the high ground north and east of that place. This meant that

each brigade had before it a distinctly different task. On the right, the 1st. Brigade had before it a series of frontal assaults. First it must cross the canal, then capture the Canal du Nord trench, advance 2,000 yards and take the Marquion line; then advance 1,500 yards to the railway cutting and embankment that formed a natural trench line, and then across open country to the final objective—a total advance of 6,000 yards ending with a frontage of 1,500 yards.

"The 3rd. Brigade attack on the left resolved itself into a series of out-flanking and turning movements. After the first rush across the canal on a 300 yard front, the brigade would break the Canal du Nord trench line and then swing north and even west in the attack on Sains-lez-Marquion, thus presenting the unique spectacle of our troops attacking directly toward our own lines. As a matter of fact, the artillery barrage here first of all travelled forward in the usual way and then began to drop back towards the guns—the result being that our own barrage was between our infantry and the guns. After the capture of Sains-lez-Marquion the Brigade continued its "rolling up" tactics by taking the Marquion line in enfilade and attacking both Keith Wood and the village of Marquion from the east—in other words, taking the garrisons of these places in the flank and rear. After crossing the Arras-Cambrai road the brigade continued its flank attack on the Canal du Nord and Marquion lines as far as the final objective for the First Phase—a total advance of 6,000 yards, and an extension of front from 300 to 2,500 yards.

"The 2nd. Brigade had a still different task. Its units had a four-mile march from the assembly position before they entered the fight. Once in the battle, it had practically open country before it, and attacked frontally, being required to make an advance of roughly 3,500 yards on a front of 1,800 yards.

"The Division, as a whole, staged forward on Sept. 19, and on Sept. 24 and 25 completed the march to the assembly areas. On the night of Sept. 25 the 1st. and 3rd. Brigades relieved

units of the 2nd. Division in the line, taking over their respective battle fronts. Divisional Headquarters moved on Sept. 26 to battle headquarters in dug-outs in a railway cutting, 2,500 yards west of Inchy.

"Sept. 27 was the day set for the attack. The 10 previous days had been spent by all units in a careful study of the country, in planning their work and in outfitting for the battle. The artillery were engaged in selecting battery positions and in getting ammunition forward, while the Engineers had to plan their share of the bridging of the canal.

"On the night of Sept. 26 all units moved forward to their assembly positions. The night was exceedingly dark and a steady rain fell until nearly dawn, which not only added to the difficulties and discomforts, but made the going very slippery all the morning.

"Owing to the extremely narrow front from which the Division had to jump off, attacking infantry and machine-gunners, supporting artillery and bridging details of Engineers, all had to be crowded into a small area. A heavy enemy concentration on this front would have jeopardized the success of the attack, but the enemy appeared to suspect nothing, and the night was 'normal.'

"The 1st. Brigade was assembled in depth on a front of about 700 yards. The leading Battalion, the 4th. Central Ontario, was in the northeastern end of Inchy-en-Artois. The 1st. Battalion, Western Ontario, was in the lower end of the Buissy Switch, some eight hundred yards in rear of the 4th. The 2nd. Battalion, Ottawa, was behind the 1st. and the 3rd., recruited from Toronto district, behind the 2nd. The 3rd. Brigade had to attack through a 300 yard defile, and so assemble on a one-battalion front. The 14th. Battalion, Royal Montreal Regiment, assembled in Paviland Wood, with the 13th., Montreal Highlanders, 1,000 yards in rear in the Buissy Switch. The 15th. Battalion, 48th. Highlanders of Toronto, was north of the 13th., and the 16th., Canadian Scottish of Western Canada, was holding the front line north of the assem-

bly area of the 14th. The 2nd. Brigade, as it did not come into action until four hours after the opening of the attack, was assembled just east of Cagnicourt, some 3,000 yards in rear of the 3rd. Brigade.

"At twenty minutes after five on the morning of Friday, Sept. 27, the attack opened under cover of an intense shrapnel and smoke barrage. Some idea of the concentration of artillery may be gained from the fact that there was an 18-pounder gun to every 21 yards of barrage on the front of the 1st. Division and that there were ten brigades of Field Artillery alone whose 240 guns fired 118,062 rounds on this first day of the battle. Supporting this Division, in addition to this, there were 160 machine-guns firing in the barrage, while special companies of Engineers were projecting smoke and boiling oil into the village of Marquion, and on the high ground further to the north. The sight, when the first gleams of daylight revealed the battle, was weird in the extreme. The horizon, as far as the eye could see, was nothing but masses and long lines of leaping, billowing smoke—dense white smoke shot through at intervals with the flicker of bursting shrapnel, or the black smudge of high explosive.

"The battle, as far as it concerned the 1st. Division, can be visualized best by following the fortunes of the individual brigades.

"The 1st. Canadian Infantry Brigade launched its attack with the 4th. Battalion. The 4th. Battalion advanced 2,000 yards and captured the Canal du Nord and Marquion trench systems on its front. The 1st. Battalion then passed through it, taking up the fighting and carrying the line forward a distance of 1,500 yards. Just as this Battalion completed its allotted task, its right flank came under heavy machine-gun fire from the railway 1,000 yards north of Bourlon village. At this time the 2nd. and 3rd. Battalions, which had been following closely, passed through the 1st. Battalion. They were held up almost at once by the enemy in the railway cutting and embankment, but by hard fighting managed to clear this

obstacle without assistance other than that offered by batteries of the machine-gun battalion that came into action at this time. Alhough the 4th. Division on the right was held up more or less definitely on a line just east of Bourlon, the 2nd. and 3rd. Battalions pushed on to the objective set for the conclusion of the First Phase, and even succeeded in working patrols forward to within 1,000 yards of the villages of Raillencourt and Haynecourt.

"The 1st. Brigade was assisted in its attack by four tanks that did valuable service in the early stages of the attack, and had attached to it three batteries of No. 1 Company of the 1st. Battalion Canadian Machine-Gun Corps.

"While the infantry, tanks and machine-guns were advancing along the whole front and while the canal was even under machine-gun fire, the Engineers were rushing the work of bridge building. With such speed was this done that at eight o'clock that morning batteries of the Divisional Artillery began to cross in support of the infantry. By 10.30 o'clock all batteries of both brigades were east of the Canal.

"From 'zero' hour on, the 1st. Brigade C.F.A. was attached to the 1st. Infantry Brigade, and advanced with it throughout the day.

"In the meantime the attack of the 3rd. Brigade was meeting with stiff opposition on the left. The 3rd. Brigade had only a narrow gap of 300 yards on its front in which the Canal du Nord could be crossed. The opening attack of this Brigade was made by the 14th. Battalion. This Battalion cleared the Canal on its front, and while one Company advanced with the 1st. Brigade the remainder swung to the left and cleared the Canal du Nord line by attacking it in enfilade, and finally, following the local 'backward' barrage already referred to, attacked the village of Sains-lez-Marquion from the east, capturing it soon after nine o'clock.

"The 13th. Battalion here took up the battle, following the same general plan put into operation by the 14th. Battalion. The leading company carried on with the general attack to the

east, while the following companies, turning to the north, attacked Keith Wood and the Marquion line. The resistance was severe, the fighting very heavy and progress was slow. In fact, the 7th. Battalion, British Columbia, of the 2nd. Brigade, and the 15th. Battalion, as well as a battalion of the 11th. Division, which were following in order to carry on the advance, became involved in the fighting here.

"Although the Marquion line east of the village of that name was captured, the village itself was still in the hands of the enemy. As a result, the 15th. Battalion and Units of the 11th. Division, as well as the Engineers engaged in bridge construction, came under heavy machine-gun fire in crossing the Canal north of Sains-lez-Marquion. Eventually, however, all the area in the canal valley up to Marquion was cleared by the 15th. Battalion. A combined attack by the 13th. and 15th. Battalions then resulted in the capture of Marquion itself. The 15th. then pushed on rapidly, and by two o'clock in the afternoon had reached the final objective of the First Phase.

"Four tanks assisted the 14th. Battalion in the initial attack but were unable to proceed beyond the Canal du Nord line. Three batteries of the Machine-Gun Battalion were attached to the 3rd. Brigade for this operation.

"While this fighting was going on units of the 2nd. Brigade were marching forward ready to intervene in the battle at the appointed hour. The 7th. Battalion, the first to enter the fight, had to leap-frog the 13th. Battalion, after that unit had captured the Marquion Line. The 7th. found the 13th. hotly engaged, and assisted it in breaking the Marquion line. By this time the artillery barrage had left the infantry far behind. A local barrage was arranged and supplied by the 2nd. Brigade, C.F.A., and under cover of this the 7th. Battalion was able to move forward, the enemy's resistance rapidly weakening as our troops advanced. The chief resistance beyond the Arras-Cambrai road was met with from machine-guns just north of Bois de Crocret. Patrols were pushed forward and reached a line over 2,000 yards north of the Arras-Cambrai Road. During

the afternoon a small counter-attack by the enemy on the centre was repulsed. The 8th. Battalion, Winnipeg, had followed the 7th. in support, but were not called on for help.

"This ended the First Phase of the battle. By two o'clock in the afternoon, we had Bourlon Wood, and our line then ran north and east from Bourlon village to within 500 yards of Raillencourt, then north practically to Haynecourt, and then swung back westward, meeting the Canal du Nord just north of Sauchy-Lestree.

"The Second Phase called for an advance by four Divisions in line, the 3rd., 4th. and 1st. Canadian and the 11th. British Division from right to left being ordered to continue the attack. The 3rd. Division on the right and the 11th. on the left had followed the attacking divisions closely and were ready to carry on the fight. The intervention of a new division on each flank meant that the 4th. and 1st. Division would have to close on the centre. It was found late in the afternoon that the 4th. Division could not continue the advance that day. The 1st. and 11th. Divisions, however, attacked about four o'clock in the afternoon according to programme.

"The continuation of the attack on the 1st. Division front was carried out by the 2nd. Brigade. The 5th., Saskatchewan, and 10th., Alberta, Battalions had assembled ready to advance, and at 3.20 o'clock the 5th. Battalion swept over the outpost line and advanced very rapidly, meeting little resistance. Haynecourt was soon captured. The 10th. Battalion here continued the advance, but soon began to meet opposition. Owing to the fact that the troops on the right were not advancing, the 5th. and 10th. Battalions had a heavy enfilade fire poured into their flank. The enemy here were in great numbers apparently, and soon had field-guns as well as machine-guns firing on our troops. In spite of this the 10th. Battalion pressed forward until held up by a heavy and continuous belt of wire just west of the Douai-Cambrai road. Patrols, although under heavy machine-gun fire, cut gaps through this wire by hand, and then, in a sudden rush, overpowered the gun crews and

crossed the Douai-Cambrai road. East of the road, however, five belts of wire were encountered, and, as the enemy fire was steadily increasing, the advance was halted.

"The 11th. British Division had advanced on the left and had captured Epinoy, but on the right the situation was far from secure. Here the Brigade found itself with an exposed right flank of 4,000 yards. The responsibility of guarding this flank developed upon the 5th. and 8th. Battalions, the 7th. being in reserve. On the front of the 5th. Battalion the enemy made three unsuccessful attacks at nightfall.

"The 1st. and 2nd. Brigades of field artillery supported the 2nd. Brigade throughout the afternoon's operations, and supplied protective fire throughout the night.

"This concluded the actual fighting on the first day of the battle. But during all this day the engineers had been busy bridging the Canal. This task was entrusted to the 3rd. Battalion Canadian Engineers. Five traffic crossings had to be constructed and four footbridges. The first traffic crossing was completed at 8.40 o'clock that morning. All bridges, with one exception, were completed by 6 o'clock in the evening. The early stages of the work were carried out under machine-gun fire, many casualties being suffered."

After the 1st. Canadian Division had secured the east line of the Canal du Nord as far north as Sauchy-Lestree, the 11th. British Division was given the task of going through them at this point and exploiting the success along their left or northern flank. Comprising the veteran 32nd., 33rd. and 34th. Brigades, it did its job in a thorough businesslike way, capturing first Sauchy-Lestree, then on its left the high ground of Oisy-le-Verger, and on the right pushing on into Epinoy. Their left flank some little distance east of the canal was protected by a barrage, and, after crossing over the canal, the 56th. Division of the XXII Corps on our right, pushed up between the Canal and the barrage, preceded by a rolling barrage and mopping up the defenses.

The fighting in this important corner, which united at once

the north and the south of the Sensee and the east and the west of the Canal du Nord, was very severe. The Bois de Quesnoy was full of machine-gun nests and concrete pill-boxes. The enemy had a good field of fire, and the marshes, organized for defense, assisted him. But the 56th. Division was not to be denied and reached its objectives.

On our right the Third Army had crossed the canal and captured part of the Hindenburg line. For the reasons set forth above, opportunity had been denied the 3rd. Canadian Division to go through the 4th. Canadian Division and storm the Marcoing line, but the Division was brought close up in support on the east side of the canal, and suffered many casualties. It was now to move up during the night to be prepared to jump off at dawn.

Failure to carry the Marcoing line on the opening day gave the enemy time to bring up reserves from Douai and elsewhere. Aware now of our strategic plan to cut in north of Cambrai, he massed his divisions in front of us, and for the next four days contested the field with great determination and even at times wrested from us ground we had won but had been unable to consolidate. Had the battle gone as planned without impediment he would have been obliged to fall back at once over the Scheldt Canal northeast of Cambrai, abandoning the city, and thus avoiding for the Canadian Corps the terrific struggle that was now to ensue.

Many noteworthy feats of arms by all ranks were performed this day, both in the actual crossing of the Canal du Nord and the advance on Bourlon Wood. Of these the following examples are selected from numerous cases as being characteristic of the conditions encountered and the spirit by which they were overcome.

Brig.-General G. S. Tuxford, in command of the 3rd. Canadian Infantry Brigade, found that his task was to cross the Canal du Nord on a front of but 450 yards and then fan out on a Brigade frontage facing due north as well as east, totalling 5,500 yards. While very gallant officers commanded the three

Battalions engaged in the attack, these were all seconds-in-command and had not previously commanded their respective Battalions in an attack. This greatly increased the responsibilities of the Brigadier, who kept in the closest touch throughout, crossing the canal shortly after the attack was launched, under heavy shell and machine-gun fire, while the enemy still held part of the eastern bank. With an utter disregard to personal danger he remained in the vicinity of the three Battalions, directing their operations and dealing with difficult situations as they arose. Much of the success of the work of this Brigade resulted from its commander's conspicuous gallantry, splendid initiative and fine leadership.

In the attack on Bourlon Wood by the 50th. Battalion, of Calgary, Pte. R. Bloor, finding that heavy rifle fire was coming from Quarry Wood, alone and of his own initiative attacked the position, driving the enemy into his dug-outs and holding him there until help came, when 146 officers and men, including an entire Battalion Headquarters staff, surrendered. He died later of his wounds.

Capt. George Fraser Kerr, of the 3rd. Battalion, recruited from Toronto district, while leading the left support company in the attack on Bourlon Wood gave timely support by outflanking a machine-gun nest holding up the advance on the railway embankment, when he rushed up two platoons, outflanking the enemy and capturing the garrison. When almost on the Arras-Cambrai road the advance was again held up by a machine-gun post, which he rushed single-handed, capturing four machine-guns and 31 prisoners, his men then being 100 yards behind him. This brilliant exploit prevented the enemy withdrawing a number of guns which fell into our hands.

During the attack of the 8th. Battalion, when a line of hostile machine-guns opened fire suddenly on his platoon, which was in an exposed position and no cover available, Cpl. Alexander Brereton, of Winnipeg, at once appreciated the critical situation and realized that unless something was done at once

the platoon would be annihilated. On his own initiative, without a moment's delay, and alone, he sprang forward and reached one of the hostile machine-gun posts, where he shot the man operating the machine-gun and bayonetted the next one who attempted to operate it, whereupon nine others surrendered to him. Inspired by this heroic example, his platoon charged and captured the five remaining posts.

CHAPTER VII

OPERATIONS: SEPT. 28-29

"THE attack was continued on Sept. 28," says Sir Arthur Currie. "The 3rd. Canadian Division captured Fontaine-Notre-Dame (one of the XVII Corps objectives), and, penetrating the Marcoing line, reached the western outskirts of St. Olle. The 4th. Canadian Division captured Raillencourt and Sailly, and the 11th. (British) Division established posts in Aubencheul-au-Bac and occupied the Bois de Quesnoy. The 1st. Canadian Division, in view of their advance of the previous day which had produced a considerable salient, did not push forward."

In other words, the day was spent by the Corps in straightening out its front by bringing up the right to a level with the left. Developments of the previous day compelled a change in the area allotted to the Canadian Corps. Instead of pushing on in a northeasterly direction towards Neuville-St. Remy, the 3rd. Canadian Division, with the 7th. and 9th. Brigades in line, after passing through the 4th. Division at dawn, turned south out of the original Corps area and stormed Fontaine-Notre-Dame, whose possession was essential if the advance were to be continued. Assisted by a hastily arranged but efficient barrage, the village was quickly reduced, and thus a movement began which resulted in the Corps right being extended still further south until it took in the west bank of the Scheldt Canal.

As the battle developed our troops stormed and consolidated the tongue of land lying between the Bapaume-Cambrai road and this canal, and thus, instead of leaving Cambrai on our right, as originally intended, we advanced against its western outskirts, faced by the canal. It is necessary to keep this in mind—that this change of Corps front bringing us under the

walls of Cambrai was due to the inability of the XVII Corps to make good our right flank from Anneux through Fontaine-Notre-Dame to the canal—because when we finally captured the city some little feeling seems to have developed among our neighbors on the ground that it was supposed by them that the Canadian Corps was outside of its proper area and had no business to seize that honor. As a matter of fact, as the progress of the battle will show, Cambrai was taken not by any local success along the canal front, but because in the great battle now developing north of it on the plateau east of the Marcoing line, the Canadian Corps in the course of several days fighting defeated in detail every available force the enemy could bring up to its defense.

Fontaine-Notre-Dame once reduced, the 3rd. Canadian Division pushed on to the assault on the Marcoing line, the attack being entrusted to the 9th. Brigade, Brig.-General D. M. Ormond. The line of attack was down a slope as smooth and open as an artificial glacis, swept by enemy machine-gun fire and by his artillery in well-placed battery positions behind. The line itself was immensely strong, sown thickly with machine-gun posts and covered by wide belts of wire. No harder fighting had been seen since the storming of the Drocourt-Queant line, and it resolved itself into a battle of detached and often isolated infantry groups.

The attacking battalions lost very heavily; thus, the 52nd. Battalion, of Fort William and Port Arthur, losing during the day from 300 to 400 of its effective strength. This battalion had seen very hard fighting ever since the kick-off of Aug. 8, and its total casualties to the evening of this day were 50 officers and 900 other ranks. Weakened though it was and exposed to more than one determined counter-attack, this battalion held the ground gained until evening, when it was relieved by the 58th. Battalion, Western Ontario, which went through and after a bitter struggle captured that portion of the Marcoing line fronting it.

The remaining battalions of the 9th. Brigade, the 43rd.,

Cameron Highlanders of Winnipeg, and the 116th., Central Ontario, encountered similar conditions and fought with the utmost tenacity. Once the Marcoing line was stormed, our troops battled their way forward into the valley lying between it and the Arras-Cambrai road, though commanded by enemy batteries on the heights beyond.

Meantime the 7th. Brigade, to the command of which Brig.-General J. A. Clark had succeeded, on appointment of Brig.-General H. M. Dyer to a command in England, was encountering equally desperate resistance and suffering severely, particularly in officers. That very gallant soldier, Lt.-Col. C. J. T. Stewart, was killed while leading into action Princess Patricia's Light Infantry. But this Brigade, whose other units were the Royal Canadian Regiment, the 42nd. Battalion, Royal Highlanders of Canada from Montreal, and the 49th. Battalion of Edmonton, once again proved its mettle and fought its way forward to its objective.

On the left of the 3rd. Division, the 4th. Canadian Division advanced their line generally and succeeded in practically wiping out the salient in which our 1st. Division found itself, but only after sanguinary fighting. The 10th. Brigade, Brig.-General R. F. Hayter, attacked, leap-frogging over the 12th. Brigade, and advanced to the Arras-Cambrai road, storming the villages of Raillencourt and Sailly, between which ran the Marcoing line. These two villages lie just under the brow of the plateau and were veritable fortresses, to be won only after hand-to-hand fighting, our men bombing their way along trenches and reducing enemy strong points in succession.

In this heavy fighting Lt.-Col. R. D. Davies of the 44th. Battalion, New Brunswick, who on the previous day had personally led his battalion in its successful attack in front of Inchy, again led the battalion, and notwithstanding heavy casualties, took every objective. Towards evening the enemy launched very heavy counter-attacks against the Brigade front, and especially against the 44th. Losses were so heavy that the line temporarily fell back. After having made a personal

reconnaissance, Col. Davies organized all elements of the Battalion, and, in co-operation with other units of the Brigade, counter-attacked, driving the enemy out, re-establishing our position and recovering our wounded lying on that front. His personal example, disregard of danger and initiative inspired all ranks to the greatest efforts under very difficult conditions.

The 50th. Battalion, of Calgary, of the same Brigade, when attacking the Marcoing line in front of Raillencourt on the same day, found itself up against heavy uncut wire and machine-guns. Pte. W. H. Smith, finding that a machine-gun crew and its supports was inflicting heavy casualties on the Battalion, went forward voluntarily alone, sniping as he went, until he was close enough to rush the post, capturing the gun and 20 prisoners.

In work of this nature the support of our Machine-Gun units was of vital importance, and magnificently did they respond. Thus, Capt. Kenneth Weaver, 4th. Battalion, Canadian M. G. Corps, of Prince Albert, Sask., displayed conspicuous gallantry on this day in front of Raillencourt. He commanded three batteries of machine-guns, two suffering severely early in the attack. He personally reorganized the batteries under heavy fire, established strong defensive positions with part of his guns, and after making a daring reconnaissance, established the remainder of his guns in advanced positions, bringing direct fire to bear on the enemy, and thereby establishing the advanced line of our troops at a most critical time.

Events on the front of the 1st. Canadian Division this day may be summarized in the words of its own narrative, as follows:—"On Sept. 28 the 3rd. and 4th. Canadian Divisions opened their attack on the right at six o'clock in the morning. The attack on the 1st. Division front was set for 9 o'clock and was to be carried out by the 10th. Battalion, of Alberta. When 9 o'clock came, although troops on neither the right nor the left had caught up, and in face of very heavy artillery and machine-gun concentration on their front, the 10th. Battalion went bravely forward and calmly commenced to cut lanes

through the heavy enemy wire by hand. For two hours this unequal fight went on in spite of swiftly dwindling numbers.

"The fight was marked by many instances of individual dash and gallantry, but none finer than the example set by Capt. Jack Mitchell, M.C., of Winnipeg, who though wounded twice by machine-gun fire, continued to pass up and down in front of the wire, seeking a point of entry, and cheering and helping his men. He was hit for the third time, this time mortally, and carried out dying.

"When it was found late in the morning that the 4th. Division was held up some distance west of the Douai-Cambrai road, the attack of the 10th. Battalion was given up. That night the 8th. Battalion, of Winnipeg, relieved the 10th."

This was the scene of a brilliant exploit on part of Pte. John Patrick Collins of Edmonton. When the 10th. Battalion was held up by wire southeast of Epinoy he went ahead alone and of his own initiative and although under heavy shell and machine-gun fire and with no cover, proceeded laboriously to cut a lane through 30 yards of wire. He was wounded seriously in the leg just as his task was completed, but our men charged through the gap and captured their objective.

Very gallant work this day was that of an artillery officer, Capt. James Creswell Auld, 1st. Brigade, C.F.A. Following up the barrage he established his "O-Pip" (Observation Post) on the right flank of the infantry near Sailly. Seeing that the infantry were held up by machine-gun fire from the village, he went forward, laying a telephone wire, until he could direct the fire of his battery on the houses and barns where the enemy was fortified. The battalion on the right was holding a line with its flank exposed for some thousand yards to enfilade enemy machine-gun fire, and had lost heavily both in officers and men. Rushing forward he called upon the infantry to follow, and carried the machine-gun post whence came the fire. He was hit in the leg but refused to be evacuated until he was unable to walk.

Further north the 11th. British Division consolidated its

position along the south bank of the Sensee from the Bois de Quesnoy, where it had established posts over night, to Aubencheul-au-Bac, where the enemy had an important rail crossing over the river, defended by a strong trench system.

Throughout the day the enemy put up a very stubborn resistance, throwing in fresh Divisions and endeavoring at all hazards to prevent our forces debouching on to the high ground between Cambrai and the Sensee marshes. Measured by depth of penetration, the day's advance had been relatively small, but the capture of the Marcoing line had been a great feat in itself, and it left us with a practical jumping-off line, from the outskirts of St. Olle on the south, through Sailly, Haynecourt and Epinoy to the Sensee at Aubencheul-au-Bac.

East of this line and on considerably higher ground, ran the Douai-Cambrai road, passing in a southeasterly direction from Aubencheul-au-Bac a little east of Epinoy to 1,200 yards east of Haynecourt, thence 2,000 yards east of Sailly to where it crossed the canal into Cambrai at Neuville-St. Remy, 2,000 yards east of St. Olle. The Douai-Cambrai railway, after leaving the Sensee, takes a wide loop east of Epinoy, to a point not far from the western outskirts of Abancourt, and thence, passing through Sancourt, runs east of and practically parallel to the road through Tilloy into the sharp northern angle of Cambrai. This railway, with its high embankments and deep cuttings, was to prove a strategic feature of the first importance both to the attacker and defender, in both of which roles Canadian troops were to figure at one time or another during the next few days.

"Heavy fighting characterized Sept. 29," says the Corps Commander. "The 3rd. Canadian Division, the 4th. Canadian Division, and the 1st. Canadian Division all made progress in the face of severe opposition. The 3rd. Canadian Division pushed the line forward to the junction of the Arras and Bapaume Road, the western outskirts of Neuville-St. Remy and the Douai-Cambrai Road. They also cleared the Marquion line from the Bapaume-Cambrai road southwards

towards the Scheldt Canal. These trenches were in the XVII Corps area, but it was difficult for our attack to progress leaving on its flank and rear this strongly held position. The 4th. Canadian Division captured Sancourt, crossed the Douai-Cambrai Railway and entered Blecourt, but later withdrew to the line of the railway in the face of a heavy counter-attack. The necessity for this withdrawal was accentuated by the situation on the left. The 11th. Division, in spite of two attempts, had been unable to occupy the high ground northeast of Epinoy. This had interfered materially with the progress of the 1st. Canadian Division, and had prevented their holding positions gained early in the day in the neighborhood of Abancourt Station, the relinquishment of which, in turn, endangered the flank of the 4th. Canadian Division."

The 3rd. Division attacked with all three brigades in line, the 9th. on the right, fighting its way down to the Scheldt Canal, the 8th. in the centre, and the 7th. on the left. Very brilliant work was done by the 1st. C. M. R., of Saskatchewan, in storming St. Olle in face of intensive machine-gun fire both from that village and Neuville-St. Remy beyond, where one of our staff officers described the rattle of machine-guns as drowning out the roar of the artillery. In this attack the battalion lost 350 men but by two o'clock in the afternoon had cleared the village and pushed its line forward to the banks of the canal at Cambrai.

Co-operating in the capture of St. Olle was the 116th. Battalion, Central Ontario, the assault gaining materially from the very brilliant action of Lieut. Bonner who with one man worked behind an enemy trench and bombed their way up it from the rear. Two whizz-bang batteries, a dozen machine-guns and a large number of prisoners were gathered in here.

From a church tower in St. Olle a clear view was offered of the city lying in the valley across the canal, where clouds of smoke indicated that the enemy was burning his dumps. In the dip of ground to the west of St. Olle lay a number of our field batteries in the open field, suffering heavy casualties from

enemy counter-battery fire. Overhead our battle 'planes pursued and drove back enemy scouting machines, bringing down two within our lines, while a third was sent crashing by our machine-gun fire. Behind the ridge, along a sunken road, passed all manner of lorries, including our motor ambulances, paying no heed to bursting shells. Well up to our battle line, and marking by its curved formation the depth of the salient we had pushed home, were our observation balloons—the familiar "sausages"; once in a while the intrepid observers—not inaptly named "balloonitics"—were forced to descend suddenly by parachute, when their floating homes had been rent by high explosive or set afire by the flaming arrows of a daring enemy aviator. Back of all lay Bourlon Wood.

On the left of the 3rd. Division the 4th. Canadian Division pushed in a very vigorous attack. Supported by a fine barrage the 12th. Brigade attacked at 5.20 a.m. through the 10th Brigade, with the 38th. Battalion, of Ottawa, on the right, and the 72nd., the Seaforth Highlanders of Vancouver, on the left. The 38th. Battalion was held up because troops on its right were not up and it was exposed throughout the day to a flank as well as frontal fire. Though suffering many casualties, this battalion consolidated its line and beat off enemy counter-attacks. It suffered a severe loss when Lt.-Col. S. D. Gardiner, whose brilliant leadership had been a great stimulus to all ranks, sustained a broken hip and other wounds from which he subsequently died.

The 72nd. Battalion pushed forward very gallantly, capturing Sancourt, and compelling the surrender of its garrison, numbering more men than the entire battalion strength. Advance was then made in the direction of Blecourt, where the enemy was established in strong underground works with a formidable system of machine-gun posts. Lieut. J. MacKnight of B. Company, with five men, penetrated into the village, and to this little advance party a hundred of the enemy surrendered, being marched out in column of four. The company coming up the rest of the garrison laid down their arms,

350 in all. An overwhelming counter-attack then developed from down the Bantigny Ravine and our men fell back on Sancourt, but taking with them 240 prisoners. "It is the first time we've had to chuck anything we've once got hold of, and we don't like it," said one of these Vancouver Highlanders. As they fell back, four of our men too seriously wounded to be brought back, could be heard putting up their last fight.

Lt.-Col. Kirkpatrick of the 72nd. Battalion set a fine example, rallying his men in the front line when the position was critical in face of determined enemy counter-attacks.

The 85th. Battalion was pushed up in support, and passing through Sancourt beat off two or three enemy counter-attacks. During this period Lt.-Col. J. L. Ralston was wounded in the cheek, temporarily losing the sight of one eye, but refused to be evacuated, staying with his battalion until it came out of the line some days later. The attack on the left had not developed as well as had been expected, and both the 72nd. and 85th. Battalions held a very exposed position. Our position in Sancourt was however consolidated and provided an advanced jumping-off point for the next day's battle.

At a critical period in the day's fighting Brig.-General J. H. McBrien made a personal reconnaissance on horseback, during the course of which he was slightly wounded in the leg, but carried on until he had obtained the information required to continue the attack.

Every battalion in the 12th. Brigade was engaged during this day of exceedingly stiff fighting, the 78th. Battalion, of Winnipeg, coming up in support and equally distinguishing itself in beating off the overwhelming forces launched by the enemy in his effort to prevent our securing footing on the plateau. This battalion pushed out far on the plateau and for a time was almost cut off. Most of its officers were casualties and Brig.-General McBrien sent up two of his Intelligence officers in support. Staff Capt. Barrie, formerly of the 72nd. Battalion, and recalled after only three days leave to take part in this battle, found himself isolated with 17 men south of

Cuvillers, but notwithstanding his wounds, from which he afterwards died, he held the position against all assaults until support came up. Staff Capt. Merston of Vancouver also did very fine work.

Here once again the stubborn qualities of the Canadian soldier were brought into full play, for it was only by the fine tenacity of all ranks that the ground consolidated was held.

On the left, on the fronts of the 1st. Canadian and 11th. British Divisions, the attack was generally held up. The 2nd. Brigade, to the command of which Brig.-General R. P. Clark had succeeded on promotion of Maj.-General Loomis to command the 3rd. Canadian Division, attacked with the 8th. Battalion, of Winnipeg, in the line, and good progress was at first made in the direction of Abancourt, but as the troops on our left failed to capture the high ground northeast of Epinoy, this temporary success had to be abandoned.

The struggle for the plateau was now about to open. The positions attained by the intensive fighting of the three first days, Sept. 27-29, had brought us to the fringe of this plateau whose possession must be followed by the fall of Cambrai and the turning of the entire enemy line south in the direction of St. Quentin. The position on our right had been made more secure by the advance of the XVII Corps, which had captured the village of Proville, across the Scheldt Canal, southwest of Cambrai, and the anxiety regarding our vulnerable right flank was at length removed. Before entering on a detailed account of the fighting of the next two days—Sept. 30 and Oct. 1—a description of the battlefield is necessary.

As already explained, the ground in front of our line was bisected first by the Douai-Cambrai road, and then, further east, by the Douai-Cambrai railway. East of this railway lies a rough quadrilateral or triangle, bounded on the west by the railway and on the north by the Canal de la Sensee, while its base is formed by the Scheldt Canal running generally northeast from Cambrai to the point beyond Estrun where it connects with the Sensee. The Canadian Corps front along the

line of the railway from the Scheldt to the Sensee extended over about 10,000 yards, and its attacking direction was northeast, its objectives being on the right to seize the bridges of the Scheldt and in its centre to seize the high land contained within this triangle. The depth of the attack from Sancourt northeast to Estrun is about 9,000 yards.

Superficially the ground favored the direction of the attack, for the ridges all trend away to the northeast. Beginning at the Scheldt the ground sloped gradually up towards the northwest over a bare slope to a ridge on the 75-metre level running some 3,000 yards northeast from Tilloy. Roughly parallel to this ridge 1,000 to 2,000 yards northwest, but with a little dip intervening, is a high bare plateau running fingerlike from the railway between Tilloy and Sancourt northeast past Cuvillers to midway between that village and Paillencourt. Two thousand yards east and a little south of Tilloy is the hamlet of Morenchies, with the wood of the same name, low-lying on the Scheldt. Following the Scheldt another thousand yards east is the Pont d'Aire, a very important tactical feature, being a series of bridges over the Scheldt and its spillways, connecting the northern bank with the industrial suburb of Escaudœuvres. Northeast another thousand yards is the town of Ramillies. Still following down the bank of the Scheldt, 2,000 yards northeast of Ramillies is the village of Eswars, whence a ravine cuts due west into the plateau towards Cuvillers.

In the fighting to follow the area thus described, namely the Scheldt on the right and the plateau on the left, fell within the 3rd. and 4th. Canadian Divisional areas respectively, the immediate objectives of the former being Tilloy, Morenchies and Ramillies, and of the latter Eswars on the right and Cuvillers on the left.

The dividing line between the 4th. Canadian Division and the 1st. Canadian Division on its left was provided by the strongly marked feature known as the Bantigny Ravine, running northeast from Sancourt through Blecourt, 1,500 yards distant, thence through Bantigny, 1,800 yards from Blecourt,

and so to the Sensee. Along the bottom of this defile runs a wooded highway, affording excellent cover for enemy machine-gunners, who were able to sweep the bare ridges and plateaux on either side.

Rising gently up from Bantigny Ravine to the northwest, a series of small detached spurs fill in the ground to where it slopes down again on the north to the Sensee Canal, and in the heart of these the strongly fortified village of Abancourt, 1,500 yards northwest of Bantigny, offered a formidable pivot of defense. Between Abancourt and Epinoy, 3,000 yards west, lies very high ground, commanding Abancourt and the Bantigny Ravine.

The position offered a tactical peculiarity in that its strength lay rather with the ravines than on the ridges, whose exposed surface was everywhere dominated by artillery and machine-gun fire. It thus came about that our troops found that their task had but begun when they stormed the ridges, and that it was an infinitely harder task to cling on to the ground they had won in face of a withering fire that at times caught them in rear as well as in flank.

The skill with which the enemy continually filtered fresh troops, for the most part machine-gunners, along the ravine bottoms into the very heart of our defense, and in face of terrible punishment, was in its way a tactical masterpiece. But the truth was he was prepared for the greatest sacrifices in order to hold the plateau. He had actually brought divisions out of the active battle line in front of the Third Army to the south of us and in front of our neighboring Corps on the north to throw in against the Canadian Corps.

It was a last ditch business. The spirit that animated him is shown by the following Corps Order captured by us a few days later:—"Soldiers of the Corps: Up to the present time we have given up to the enemy a certain amount of foreign land of little value for military reasons, while causing him heavy casualties. The British are seeking a decision and we, of this Corps, have a most important section from the point of view of

a decision. Remember that here you are now defending your home, your family and your dear Fatherland. Remember how your homes will look if war is carried there and with it invasion of the enemy's hordes. If you will stand fast, victory will be ours as before, for you are superior to the enemy, who now only shows a desire to attack with tanks, and these tanks we shall destroy. Therefore: Carry-on! Use your rifle cold-bloodedly and cold steel with courage. I expect that every man will do his duty in the decisive battle coming, from the general to the youngest private."

It is curious to note how yet once again the German soldier is told that it is only the tanks he has to fear. As has been seen, in this great battle of Cambrai the Canadian infantry depended almost entirely upon their own efforts and their admirable artillery. Nevertheless it is beyond question that the tank became something of an obsession with the German soldier. His morale in this direction was supported by every kind of mechanical device, of which the anti-tank rifle was perhaps the most efficient. At the crossings of the Canal du Nord south of Marquion Canadian Engineers located 245 anti-tank mines, which were destroyed by gun-cotton. Various devices were used, a favorite being a loose plank left lying in the road which required however the weight of a tank before setting off the detonator. One of the few tanks at our disposal fell victim to a mine of this character.

CHAPTER VIII

OPERATIONS: SEPT. 30-OCT. 2

"THE operation of Sept. 30 was planned in two phases," says Sir Arthur Currie. "In the first, the 3rd. and 4th. Canadian Divisions were to push forward across the high ground between the Scheldt Canal and the Blecourt-Bantigny Ravine, when Brutinel's Brigade was to pass through them and secure bridgeheads at Ramillies and Eswars. The second phase, to take place on the success of the first, provided for the seizing of the high ground overlooking the Sensee river by the 1st. Canadian Division and the 11th. (British) Division. The attack commenced well, and the villages of Tilloy and Blecourt were captured by the 3rd. and 4th. Canadian Divisions respectively. A heavy counter-attack, however, against the 4th. Canadian Division and the left flank of the 3rd. Canadian Division, assisted by exceptionally severe enfilade fire from the high ground to the north of the Blecourt-Bantigny Ravine, forced the line on the left bank to the eastern outskirts of Sancourt. The second phase of the attack was not carried out, and the net gains for the day were the capture of Tilloy and some progress made on the right of the 3rd. Canadian Division from Neuville-St. Remy south. Prisoners taken during the day testified to the extreme importance, in the eyes of the enemy, of the positions held by him and the necessity that they be held at all costs."

"Zero" hour was set for 6 a.m., before dawn. It was designed to lay down a rolling barrage on the narrow front selected for the initial attack, and to protect the flanks by smoke barrages, to blot out enemy observation in the ravines and on the high ground to the north. For this purpose there was a considerable concentration of our artillery. All our field batteries had suffered severely in the fighting of the previous days,

as the guns had to be pushed up in the open, taking advantage indeed of what natural cover offered, but without prepared emplacements. Casualties were proportionately severe. Thus on one day the 12th. Battery, Canadian Field Artillery, lost one officer, Capt. Ross, and four other ranks killed, and 18 wounded, and the 11th. Battery, in an exposed position on the Cambrai road, suffered a direct hit and had 27 casualties in one day.

The gallant work of our gunners under these trying conditions is well illustrated by the following extracts from the diary of the 13th. Battery, C.F.A.

"Sept. 27—Bourlon Wood show. Took position just after dawn between Inchy and Canal du Nord; *i.e.*, across No Man's Land, and from there took part in second phase of attack. This was only possible by the smoke barrage which screened enemy observation from Bourlon Wood, which had not at that time been taken. Moved position same evening to just north of Quarry Wood. Gunner McCallum wounded at guns, later killed on way to dressing station. Corpl. R. Cameron, Corpl. J. Mitchen, Bombadier King and Gunner A. Patterson wounded at guns.

"Sept. 28—Moved guns to north side of Arras-Cambrai road by a farmhouse one and a quarter miles west of Raillencourt. Gnr. Painter wounded at guns, later died of wounds. Same night bomb lit in wagon lines one and a half miles west of guns, killing 28 horses and wounded Drivers Dawson, Melville, Blackmore, Monroe, Baird, Clarke, Nelson, Hogg and Cpl. Riddel; Dawson died of wounds. Signallers Murray and Klock wounded on Officer's Patrol; Klock died of wounds.

"Sept. 29—Another show. Severe fighting, little progress. Shell in wagon lines killed Driver Gagne and wounded Dvr. W. Lawson, also killing eight horses. Moved up one section in afternoon under Lieut. Stubbs and Simonds. At 11 p.m. received orders to move up remainder of Battery to forward section position on sunken road just south of Haynecourt for show before dawn next day.

"Sept. 30—Show "zero" hour 4.30 a.m. Enemy had planned his decisive counter-attack with eight divisions on our two division front to commence this morning at 5 a.m. Counter-battery fire very intense; two guns out of action by shell fire. Gnr. R. Leitch killed at guns; Sergts. H. Murray and Foster and Gnr. W. Hershall wounded at guns. Terrific fighting by Infantry; attacks, counter-attacks, etc.; terrific casualties, especially in Infantry. Moved guns back in afternoon to former position. Gnr. Spearn wounded during night by stray shell at guns.

"Oct. 1—Another show. Progress slight on account of reduced strength of units. Advanced battery 1,000 yards to next little dip in front."

This battery was recruited in 1914 from Hamilton and Brantford, Ont., and it is interesting to note that 34 "originals" were still on strength at the armistice, while the democratic character of the Canadian army is shown by the fact that 22 of its N.C.O's obtained commissions.

The attack went well at first, but with dawn came a heavy gale from the west which resulted in the failure of our smoke barrage, and our men who had pushed out along the ridges became exposed to a tremendous concentration of enemy fire, presently supported by massed counter-attacks.

"They have a machine-gun to every ten yards of front," said a Brigade staff officer. "There has been nothing like it in this war. From the ravines they pick off our men on the ridges like crows. Over ninety per cent. of our casualties are from machine-gun bullets."

The task assigned the 3rd. Canadian Division was to capture Tilloy and Morenchies, and then push on to Ramillies. In close conjunction the 4th. Canadian Division was also to push out due east with Eswars as the final objective. The attack on our right prospered from the start, troops of the 7th. Brigade, including the P.P.L.I's on the right and Royal Canadian Regiment on the left, capturing in succession Tilloy and Morenchies, with elements even pushing on to the outskirts of

Ramillies. Our position along the Scheldt Canal was thus consolidated and a wedge driven in between the garrison of Cambrai and the German forces massed about the northern plateau.

Unfortunately the same good fortune did not attend our left. The attack was undertaken by the 11th. Brigade, to which the 85th. Battalion had been detached from the 12th. Brigade in support. The 102nd. Battalion, British Columbia, was also held in reserve, but was under very heavy fire throughout the day and came into action at a later stage. The attack was carried out by the 87th. Battalion, the Grenadier Guards of Montreal, on the right, the 75th. Battalion, Central and Western Ontario, in the centre, and the 54th. Battalion, British Columbia, on the left.

A good advance was made along the plateau under cover of darkness, but with dawn and the failure of our smoke barrage as related above, the attacking force was subjected to a tremendous enfilade machine-gun fire from Blecourt and Abancourt. The men in little knots began digging themselves in on the bare upland, and there withstood wave after wave of enemy infantry, advancing with the utmost courage to the attack, although great holes were torn in their ranks by our artillery and machine-guns. The position on our left was untenable and our men fell back fighting every step to the line of the railway. This in turn brought to a halt troops on our right and finally led to their partial retirement, but although at one stage Tilloy was lost, we recaptured it before the end of the day.

Tilloy will go down in the history of the P.P.L.I. as one of its most famous fights. After every senior officer had fallen, Capt. James Nesbit Edgar assumed command of the battalion. At a critical hour, when three companies on the left were badly disorganized under tremendous machine-gun fire, and had even begun to withdraw from the position won, he went forward and rallied the men, leading them on to their objective. By his cheerfulness, energy and disregard for danger he so

inspired all ranks that they willingly followed him through the most intensive shell and machine-gun fire, and it was due to his unflagging work that enemy counter-attacks were beaten off and Tilloy remained in our hands at the end of the hard-fought day.

The character of the fighting, described by those who took part in it as the stiffest Canadian troops had ever faced, can best be gathered by following the fortunes of one of the battalions engaged, this being the 75th. This unit, as we have seen, had lost heavily in the successful attack on Bourlon Wood. On the morning of Sept. 29 it moved up from Bourlon to the Lillas farm on the Arras-Cambrai road 1,500 yards west of Raillencourt and about as much southwest of Haynecourt, bivouacking there for the night. Guides reported at 2.30 a.m. for the attack on the Douai-Cambrai railway, the first objective. On the way in to the jumping-off line two company officers were killed at head of their companies, and only four officers per company were left. In the darkness there was some confusion but three minutes before "zero" every company was in its appointed place, 500 yards in advance of our outposts holding the line, and just west of the railway itself.

Our barrage opened 20 yards short of the railway and then settled for ten minutes on the line of the embankment, following which our men went over. Three minutes later the enemy, who had massed a number of divisions for an attack in force, laid down an intensive barrage of 5.9-inch guns and Yellow Cross gas on the very area our men had just left, but causing not a single casualty. It was a much heavier barrage than our own, but ours was magnificently—uncannily even—accurate, destroying entirely the enemy's line of defense along the steep railway embankment.

The second in command, Captain Duncan, a company commander, was killed almost at once as the battalion swept forward. A hail of machine-gun fire came from the exposed left flank all along the Bantigny Ravine, and although a screen of defensive posts was thrown out against Blecourt, no troops

could long stand up against such punishment. The battalion fell back to the railway and clung there all day. Towards evening Col. Thompson was ordered to withdraw his men to the Marquion line, 2,000 yards back, but only 50 men were left unwounded and every officer but himself had become a casualty. Nevertheless what remained of this battalion went into action again on the following day. The 54th. and 102nd. Battalions took over the posts established.

In Blecourt besides numerous machine-guns were four heavy guns and a special battalion of Wurtemburger marksmen, stout fellows who made great play with their machine-guns. The attack had failed, but nevertheless the line of railway had been attained and held, and the enemy's evident intention of driving us back into Bourlon Wood had been frustrated by our bold offensive. But it was clear that the battle was far from won. We must either abandon what had been gained with so much heroism and at such great cost, thus crippling the general advance, or face the alternative of pursuing the battle with weakened forces until we had gained a decision and established ourselves upon the plateau. The issue is plainly set forth by Sir Arthur Currie who then proceeds to trace the fortunes of the crucial battle of Oct. 1, in the following terms:—

"The tremendous exertions and considerable casualties consequent upon the four days' almost continuous fighting had made heavy inroads on the freshness and efficiency of all arms, and it was questionable whether an immediate decision could be forced in the face of the heavy concentration of troops which our successful and, from the enemy's standpoint, dangerous advance, had drawn against us. On the other hand, it was known that the enemy had suffered severely, and it was quite possible that matters had reached a stage where he no longer considered the retention of this position worth the severe losses both in men and morale consequent upon a continuance of the defense. It was therefore decided that the assault would be continued on Oct. 1, the four Divisions in line attacking

simultaneously under a heavy barrage, co-ordinated by the G.O.C., R.A. During the night the XXII Corps took over a portion of the front held by the 11th. Division, the 56th. Division becoming responsible for the defense of the relieved front at 6 a.m., Oct. 1.

"The attack made excellent progress in the early stages, and the troops reached the general line, Scheldt Canal (east of Neuville-St. Remy)—Morenchies Wood—Cuvillers—Bantigny (all inclusive).

"The decision of the enemy to resist to the last quickly manifested itself. About 10 a.m. heavy counter-attacks developed up the Bantigny Ravine from the direction of Paillencourt. These, supplemented by enfilade fire from the high ground just south of Abancourt, which still remained in the enemy's hands, due to a certain extent to the inability of the 11th. Division on the left to make progress, were sufficient to press back our advanced troops. Pockets of the enemy in Blecourt and Bantigny continued to give trouble, and our line was ultimately forced by greatly superior numbers out of Cuvillers, Bantigny and Blecourt.

"To continue to throw tired troops against such opposition, without giving them an opportunity to refit and recuperate, was obviously inviting a serious failure, and I accordingly decided to break off the engagement. The five days' fighting had yielded practical gains of a very valuable nature, as well as 7,059 prisoners and 205 guns.

"We had gone through the last organized system of defenses on our front, and our advance constituted a direct threat on the rear of the troops immediately to the north of our left flank, and their withdrawal had now begun.

"Although the ground gained on Oct. 1 was not extensive, the effects of the battle and of the previous four days' fighting were far-reaching, and made possible the subsequent advances of October and November, in so far as the Divisions engaged against the Canadian Corps drew heavily on the enemy's reserves, which had now been greatly reduced.

"It is worthy of note that the enemy employed six Divisions to reinforce the four Divisions already in the line, making a total of ten Divisions engaged since Sept. 27 by the Canadian Corps. In addition to their 10 Divisional Artilleries and large number of heavy guns, these German Divisions had been reinforced by 13 Marksmen Machine-Gun Companies.

"In the same period only three additional Divisions and one Regiment were employed by the Germans to reinforce the front from Honnecourt to Cambrai, a front of approximately 18,000 yards in length.

"This comparison of employment of reserves showed clearly that the enemy was greatly perturbed by the success of our advance, and the serious threat it offered especially to his northern defenses.

"Throughout this phase very heavy calls had been made on the Corps Artillery (Major-General E. W. B. Morrison) and the Canadian Engineers.

"With the exception of the advances of the 1st. Canadian and 11th. (British) Divisions in the second stage of the attack of Sept. 27, all operations carried out during the five days took place under cover of Artillery barrages. The amount of ammunition fired was exceptionally large, and it was only by the most strenuous efforts on the part of all ranks of the Artillery that the supply could be made to keep pace with the expenditure.

"The success in this respect was to a large extent due to the exertion and skill displayed by the Canadian Engineers (Major-General W. B. Lindsay) in every branch of their activities, notably in bridge-building and repair of roads."

The night of Sept. 30-Oct. 1 was bitter cold with torrential rains, and for the most part the troops detailed for the attack next morning had to tough it out in the open. "Zero" hour was set for 5 a.m., while it was still dark, and it was hoped that by a broad attack covering the entire Corps front between the Scheldt and the Sensee the disastrous enfilade fire, which had stopped and thrown back our attack on a relatively narrow

front of the previous day, would be blanketed. This plan postulated success all along the line and the development of a weak spot anywhere must seriously compromise success elsewhere.

The attack at first succeeded admirably. On the right elements of the 3rd. Division pushed on through Morenchies, seized the bridgehead at Pont d'Aire and established posts in Ramillies.

The attack was entrusted to the 9th. Brigade, with the 43rd. Battalion, Winnipeg, on the right, and the 52nd. Battalion, Fort William and Port Arthur, on the left, advancing under heavy machine-gun fire on the crest of the hill down the slope towards Ramillies. The 58th. Battalion, Western Ontario, and the 116th. Battalion, Central Ontario, came up in support, all four battalions being very heavily engaged. The 116th. pushed on into Ramillies, the attacking force rushing the bridgehead in face of the point-blank fire of a whizz-bang battery. Major Carmichael, who had succeeded to the command of the battalion after Lt.-Col. G. R. Pearkes had been wounded and who himself had been wounded in the Amiens show, led his men throughout, and even after he had been seriously wounded refused to be evacuated, staying with his command for two hours until he was no longer able to direct his men.

On the left of our 3rd. Division the 4th. Canadian Division also drove home its attack, the 11th. Brigade advancing across the plateau and storming Cuvillers. But, as has been related by the Corps Commander, a weakness developed on the extreme left, and in turn the 1st. Canadian Division fell back, forcing the withdrawal of the 4th. Division, which found itself with its left flank in the air. The 102nd. Battalion, British Columbia, which had led the attack with great gallantry, was for a time in perilous danger of being isolated and cut off, and it was only the utmost heroism of its men, supported by flanking outposts promptly thrown out against Blecourt and Bantigny by Brig.-General Odlum, that saved it from disaster.

In a day of wonderful deeds, particularly striking was the leadership of Lieut. Fraham Thomson Lyall, 102nd. Battalion, a native of Lancashire who had enlisted at St. Catharines, Ont. Finding himself in command of the company on the right flank, now only 50 strong, by skilful dispositions he captured a strong enemy position east of Blecourt, and with it 17 machine-guns and 80 prisoners. This he fortified and clung steadfastly to it until relieved, thus preventing the turning of our flank. This officer had had a wonderful record throughout this battle. After leading his platoon against Bourlon Wood, he rendered invaluable support to the leading company, capturing a strong point which held it up by a flank movement, taking one field gun, four machine-guns and 13 prisoners, the rest of the garrison being killed. Later his platoon, much weakened by casualties, was held up by machine-guns at the southern end of Bourlon Wood. Collecting every man available, he led them toward the strong point. Springing forward alone, he rushed the position, killing the officer in charge, when the garrison surrendered with five machine-guns. Having made good his objective, capturing 47 more prisoners, he consolidated his position and thus protected the remainder of the company. During this battle Lieut. Lyall captured in all three officers and 182 other ranks, one field gun and 26 machine-guns, exclusive of heavy casualties inflicted.

CHAPTER IX

OPERATIONS: SEPT. 30-OCT. 2.—CONTINUED

WHAT had happened on the left is described in the narrative of the 1st. Canadian Division, already drawn upon so copiously:—"Orders were issued on the night of Sept. 30 for a synchronized attack on Oct. 1 by the four divisions in line. The 1st. Divisional front was extended a thousand yards to the south, making a total front of attack of about 3,000 yards. During the night the 3rd. Brigade, Brig.-General G. S. Tuxford, moved forward to the right and assembled behind the 12th. Brigade, through whom they were to attack. The attack of the 1st. Division was to be made by the 3rd. and 1st. Brigades.

"The barrage opened at 5 o'clock. On the right, the 13th. Battalion, Montreal Highlanders, attacked and captured Blecourt after very heavy fighting. On the left the 1st. Battalion, Western Ontario, and 4th. Battalion, Central Ontario, launched the attack for the 1st. Brigade, Brig.-General W. A. Griesbach. The 1st. Battalion secured the line of the railway north of Blecourt, but were unable to get beyond owing to the intense fire from Abancourt. On the left the 4th. Battalion got to within 200 yards of the railway, but were definitely held up there. Further on the left the attack of the 11th. (British) Division had been stopped at the very start.

"In the meantime the 16th. Battalion, Canadian Scottish of Western Canada, and 14th. Battalion, Royal Montreal Regiment, passed through Blecourt and attacked on the right and left. Cuvillers and Bantigny were captured by eight o'clock by these battalions respectively. Enemy activity on the exposed left developed into counter-attacks against the 14th. Battalion, three being driven off. Both battalions were now in untenable positions, enemy machine-gun concentrations

on the high ground west of Abancourt sweeping their left rear and artillery firing at point-blank range from their front. Under the circumstances a retirement was ordered, the enemy being made to pay dearly for every foot of ground given up. A short stand was made at Blecourt, but fresh enemy attacks forced our line back to west of this village—a line held with the aid of artillery and machine-gun fire against continued enemy attacks."

The fighting to which the 1st. Canadian Division was thus exposed was peculiarly bitter and gave opportunity for many deeds of heroism. Thus Capt. Chester Francis Cummins of the 1st. Battalion, Western Ontario, while leading in his company found that owing to the darkness his men were pushing in ahead of our own barrage. He ran forward and under heavy machine-gun fire checked and reorganized the men. In the subsequent advance, in which his company suffered many casualties, he was severely wounded in the arm, but with indomitable spirit and almost superhuman effort he forced his way forward, cheering and inspiring his men until again hit. He nevertheless still pressed on, cheering and exhorting his men, until he received a third and fatal wound.

In the attack on Abancourt, the 4th. Battalion, Central Ontario, found itself held up by wire and machine-gun posts. Sergt. William Merrifield of Ottawa, finding that his men were being shot down by the deadly fire coming from two enemy machine-gun posts on high ground on the flank, attacked them both single-handed. He dashed from shell hole to shell hole until he had sniped three of the crew of the first post, and then killed the fourth with the butt of his rifle. He fell wounded into the post, but presently recovering, he clambered out and attacked the second post, throwing a bomb, and under cover of the explosion dashed in and killed the three men working the gun. He then returned to his platoon, refusing to be evacuated and leading his men with great skill until severely wounded.

In this battle Major Roderick Ogle Bell-Irving, command-

ing the 16th. Battalion, Canadian Scottish, fought his last fight. He skilfully led the attack in the darkness, fearlessly exposing himself in all phases until the objective of Cuvillers was taken. The battalion had suffered severely, but he went along the line, reorganizing his men and consolidating the position. While he was engaged on this at his outposts a heavy enemy counter-attack developed on the left flank of the Battalion. He personally directed the fire of two machine-guns until the ammunition was exhausted, when, seeing his left flank was in danger of being enveloped by the masses of the enemy, he ordered the withdrawal of the outpost line. He remained until every man had left the outpost, but while retiring on the main line of resistance he was fatally wounded. He refused to allow his men to stay with him as the enemy was rapidly surrounding the spot where he lay. His body was afterwards recovered by the battalion.

The narrative of the 1st. Canadian Division continues as follows:—"That night the 6th. Brigade of the 2nd. Division relieved the 3rd. Brigade, and the 2nd. Brigade relieved the 1st. Brigade on the left. The next day passed without incident, and on the night of Oct. 2 the 2nd. Brigade was relieved by a Brigade of the 11th. British Division—the relief of the 1st. Division being completed by ten o'clock on the morning of Oct. 3, the Division then coming into Corps Reserve."

As a matter of fact the 6th. Brigade was engaged during the day of Oct. 1, the 27th. Battalion, of Winnipeg, 28th. Battalion, of Regina, and 29th. Battalion, of Vancouver, all taking part in the battle, as did other elements of the 2nd. Canadian Division, Maj.-General Sir Henry E. Burstall. This Division, which, as has been recorded before, had seen fighting all through the early summer months in the line before Arras while the other Canadian Divisions were in G.H.Q. Reserve, and had actively held the line of the Canal du Nord throughout September, was now brought up to renew the vigor of our attack on the following morning, the intention being for the 5th. Brigade to go in on the right and the 6th. Brigade on the left, relieving troops holding the centre of our line.

These two Brigades came up during the early afternoon and for some hours lying in close support. They were here exposed to very heavy fire, and suffered heavy casualties. Thus the 6th. Brigade was in support of the 9th. Brigade along the line of the Scheldt, and though it had no actual fighting in this sector, one of its Battalions, the 27th., of Winnipeg, lost nine officers and 125 men. Nothing is harder on troops than this passive exposure to a galling fire, and when the order came to move up in active support there was general relief. Pressure was so great during the afternoon that it became necessary to use some of the elements of the 2nd. Canadian Division in the line, and thus for the last time in the history of the Canadian Corps all four of its Divisions were engaged in a common battle line on the same day.

The description given above makes clear the reasons for the relative failure of this cumulative effort. There was here all the material for a striking success, and in the early morning all the objectives had been attained. But the weakness of our left flank, due to failure of the 11th. Division to take and hold the heights between Epinoy and Abancourt, reacted all along the line. But this was only one cause. The other was our own weakened ranks together with the unprecedented number of men—at this stage in the war—the enemy did not hesitate to throw in against us. His losses were tremendous. Our artillery had never had such a day. From dawn until dark they poured in their fire often at point-blank ranges, and the litter of enemy dead upon the battlefield, as it was afterwards exposed to our view, was nothing less than appalling. If we had fallen short of victory, the sequel was to show that we had beaten the enemy to a standstill and that he had no stomach left for further fight with the Canadian Corps.

Allusion has been made before to a published narrative of the First Army, under which the Canadian Corps fought all the way from Arras to Mons. It is entitled, "The Final Blow of the First Army in 1918," and what it says about this particular day is interesting:—

"Oct. 1 and 2—On these days the fighting was extraordinarily severe. The Canadians, who are experts at tough fighting, acclaim it the stiffest they have ever been up against. The object was to take the bridgeheads over the canal northeast of Cambrai. That once done, the enemy would be out of the commanding and extremely valuable high ground which, on the south, commanded Cambrai with its railway junctions, and on the north rested on the Sensee marshes and overlooked the country to the north of them. In many ways a key-position to the whole line.

"Here, then, on ground admirably suited and organized for defense, and necessary to the Boche line, the Germans put up a desperate fight. Up the ravines from the northeast, especially up the hollow leading to Bantigny, they brought division after division; 13 divisions are known to have been thrown into the fight, only to be smashed by our tireless guns and our indomitable troops. One battery of heavies on Oct. 1 fired 1,600 rounds.

"The enemy's cleverly placed machine-guns fought hard. Round Blecourt, as a centre, the battle raged. But machine-gun positions were hunted down, the masses of the enemy were torn by our artillery fire with awful slaughter, to be replaced by others who suffered the same fate. The Canadians and the 11th. British Division, though suffering from heavy losses and wearied with days of fighting and advancing, held and improved their ground. Pressed in front and with his retreat threatened by the advance of the Third Army from the south, the Hun began sullenly to withdraw, though still fighting, his shattered divisions. The ground was ours; the capture of Cambrai was now only a matter of time. Patrols had already entered its outskirts."

It is difficult to give a true picture of this day's fighting. Did space permit, official records of deeds of individual officers and men who this day earned military honors would fill in the sketch. A few of these have been given above. The following cases illustrate how the men fought day after day

almost without pause until they were tired and battle weary, but still refused to admit defeat.

Lieut. Milton Fowler Gregg, Royal Canadian Regiment, a native of Mountain Dale, N.B., when the advance of the 7th. Brigade on Sept. 28 against the Marcoing line was held up by heavy machine-gun fire on both flanks and thick uncut wire in front of the enemy trench system, crawled forward alone and explored the wire until he found a small gap. Through this he led his men, organizing bombing parties, which went right and left along the trench. The enemy counter-attacked in force, and through lack of bombs the situation became critical for his company. Although wounded in the head and weakened by loss of blood, he started back alone to our attacking line, and going from one company to another collected a further supply of bombs which he carried back, suffering a second wound, this time in the side. He found but a handful of his men left, but he quickly reorganized them and started to bomb the enemy out of his defense system. This consisted of a series of short trenches, three to seven yards long, and the enemy advanced over the top to the attack time after time. But at length he cleared the system, himself killing 11 and taking 25 prisoners. Notwithstanding his severe wounds he steadfastly refused to be evacuated. On Sept. 30 he again led his company in to the attack, but was severely wounded and was ordered out by his senior officer. He made his report at Battalion Headquarters and then collapsed.

Lieut. Honey, who had risen from the ranks of the 78th. Battalion, of Winnipeg, particularly distinguished himself. On Sept. 27, in the attack on Bourlon Wood, when his company officer and all other officers had become casualties, he took command and skilfully reorganized under severe fire. He continued the advance with great dash and reached the objective. Then, finding that his company was suffering casualties from enfilade machine-gun fire, he located the machine-gun nest and rushed it single-handed, capturing the guns and 10 prisoners. Subsequently he repelled four enemy counter-at-

tacks, and after dark went out alone, and having located an enemy post, led a party and captured the post and three machine-guns. On Sept. 29, in the fight for the plateau, he led his company against a strong enemy position with great skill and daring and continued in the succeeding days of the battle to display the same high example of valor and self-sacrifice. On the last day of the attack by his battalion, he was wounded in both legs, but carried on, doing wonderful work. Finally he received wounds from which he died.

Capt. John MacGregor, 2nd. C.M.R., who enlisted at Vancouver but is a native of Nairn, Scotland, during the attack of the 8th. Brigade on Sept. 30, although wounded, led his company under intense fire. When held up by a machine-gun post, he seized a rifle, and single-handed and in broad daylight attacked with the bayonet, killing four and capturing eight of the enemy. His prompt action saved many casualties and enabled the attack to go forward. Later on, he gathered his men together under intense fire and organized a party to fill in a gap in the flank and reinforce our troops attacking Tilloy. Hearing that two commanders of companies attacking on the right had become casualties, and seeing that the stubborn resistance of the enemy was holding up our advance, with absolute disregard of danger, he went along the line, organized the platoons, and taking command of the leading waves, continued the advance. Later, after a personal daylight reconnaissance, he established his company in Neuville St. Remy, thus greatly assisting the advance into Tilloy.

During the attack on the Canal du Nord on Sept. 27, Lieut. Thomas Easson Miller, 8th. Battalion, of Winnipeg, led his platoon with great skill and gallantry. His company commander became a casualty early in the engagement, and though he himself was wounded, he remained on duty, showing splendid judgment and coolness in command of the company, taking it to its objective. That evening, just west of Haynecourt, the enemy counter-attacked on the exposed right flank of the 2nd. Brigade, but Lieut. Miller succeeded in building up a right

flank, and that night he made a daring reconnaissance. Disregarding his wound, next day when troops on his right failed to keep up with the advance, he established contact by covering the gap and thus secured a very dangerous situation. On Sept. 29, when at nine o'clock in the morning his battalion attacked east of the Douai-Cambrai road, all the officers of the two companies on the right having become casualties, he took command and led the attack successfully through two belts of wire, and under heavy fire attacked alone a group of the enemy and captured 22 prisoners. When troops on either flank failed to keep up he consolidated a line and beat off three enemy counter-attacks. At half past two that afternoon he was knocked unconscious by a shell, but recovering two hours later resumed command and protected the right flank against repeated attacks, refusing to leave the line until the battalion was relieved. His determination and coolness won a glorious fight.

Sergt. Theodore Martin, in the same operation, when all the officers in his vicinity had become casualties, and though himself severely wounded in the leg, recognizing that the situation was most serious and must be controlled, remained in a shell-hole, where, although unable to move, he continued to direct his men for 10 hours, refusing to be evacuated until relieved. Not only did he display great fortitude, but his cool and accurate messages telephoned in to Battalion Headquarters throughout the day saved a very tight corner.

Great heroism was displayed by the auxiliary services in this terrible battle, and by none more so than the Chaplain Service. Once again the Padres gave proof of their devotion upon the field. Thus, Capt. Albert Edward Andrew, chaplain of the Royal Canadian Regiment, when our men were forced to withdraw, for 40 hours, without an interval for rest, made repeated trips into No Man's Land, often in face of intensive machine-gun fire, bringing in our wounded. When all the officers of this Battalion had become casualties, he remained in the front line, carrying food and drink to groups of our men,

and inspiriting them, so that even in the midst of beating off an enemy counter-attack, they raised a cheer for his gallantry.

In this battle Canon Scott of Quebec City, beloved senior chaplain of the 1st. Canadian Division, was wounded by a shell which exploded beside him, wounding him in many places, in arms, legs and body. When he was wounded the expression of surprise that he had so long escaped was very general, as it was frequently remarked that he "was looking for it." On the route of evacuation, despite his painful wounds, through aid posts, Dressing Station and Casualty Clearing Station, he carried his large crucifix in his hand and preached to those about him impressive sermons on patience, Christian fortitude and resignation. A wounded soldier remarked how edifying it was to see how happy he was in his sufferings.

Gallant work too was done by the Medical Service. The conduct of the stretcher-bearers, working continuously under fire, was beyond all praise, and nothing could surpass the devotion of the drivers of the ambulances. Magnificent work throughout was done by our field ambulances, and also by Medical Officers attached to fighting units. Thus on Sept. 27 Capt. Albert R. Hagerman, M.O. of the 78th. Battalion, followed close behind the attacking infantry and established a regimental aid post in the open under heavy shell and machine-gun fire. On Sept. 29 he established a dressing-station in a forward trench, and for two days he worked unceasingly under shell fire in this position, dressing hundreds of wounded.

In the intensive fighting of these days casualties among regimental officers were particularly severe, these exposing themselves fearlessly in order to hearten their men. Among the wounded was Lt.-Col. C. R. E. Willets of the Royal Canadian Regiment.

In this battle the Canadian Corps touched its pinnacle of fame. Beyond question the battle, and especially the fighting of Sept. 30 and Oct. 1, was the most savage and sustained in which the Canadian Corps ever engaged. Only the utmost heroism and tenacity of our infantry, ably supported by our

gunners, enabled us to cling on in the salient we had driven into the heart of the enemy's defense in face of withering fire and there withstand wave after wave of counter-attacks by almost overwhelming numbers. In this wonderful stand against enemy masses determined to wrest from them their conquests, gallant and heroic episodes were innumerable. Battalions, companies and little knots of men stood their ground unflinchingly, though often detached and even cut off for a time from all support.

It is the penalty of storming troops, such as the Canadian Corps, that they sometimes create for themselves, in their impetuous advance, unprotected flanks. The salient they drive into the enemy line becomes enfiladed, and if power is not at hand to widen it out into a practical front, the troops in the apex must either fight it out against overwhelming odds or fall back. The latter is not the lesson the Canadian Corps had learned, and it was this desperate clinging to positions tactically untenable that contributed to our heavy casualties. There is the case of a sergeant who refused to fall back when ordered by his superior officer, and fought his company all day until night descended. In those five days of battle the Canadian Corps dealt such a blow at the enemy that he reeled back to final defeat. Above everything else it was the unconquerable spirit of all ranks that gained the decision. Notwithstanding his lavish outpourings of blood, he had not shaken a whit our strangle-hold on his vital pivot of Cambrai.

But that we had gained the decision was by no means clear on the evening of Oct. 1. Our losses had been so severe, our reserves had been so freely drawn upon, that there was anxiety on all hands that night as to whether the morning might not see a last final thrust such as we might be in no condition to fight off. Logic was against it. He had used up against us on this day no less than 33 battalions; our Intelligence reported that since the battle opened he had been forced to send to the north five reserve divisions he might still have drawn upon; and it was difficult to see where he could get fresh troops to

continue the battle. It was a night of anxiety indeed, but there was the cheering sight of enemy dumps being blown up and burning in his immediate rear.

But we were taking no chances. At five o'clock in the morning of Oct. 2 our artillery laid down a tremendous counter-preparation along the whole line, designed to catch his waves should they be advancing to the assault. Nothing developed. Dawn broke and the enemy line was suspiciously quiet. Then the word began to go round that he was falling back—that he had mistaken our barrage for another attack such as he had had to face in each of the five preceding mornings. The battle was won.

CHAPTER X

AFTER THE BATTLE

"HE'S beat it!" The word passed with incredible rapidity. His wind was up and he had gone back to the canal. From Corps Commander to the men in the ranks it was a tremendous relief. The battle was won; our sacrifices had not been in vain. Cambrai, sign manual of our victory, lay within our grasp and might be taken at any hour.

As a matter of fact this was not quite the case. His power for offense was indeed broken, but for some days yet he lay sullenly on his line running across the Bantigny Ravine. Only at night great fires could be seen far in his rear. Some stiff fighting had still to be done before Cambrai fell and the enemy was cleared out of the triangle on the hither side of the Scheldt.

But on Oct. 2, after five days of the hardest continuous fighting in which the Canadian Corps had been ever engaged, knowledge came to us that the victory was ours. Four Canadian Divisions, with the 11th. British Division, had met and overwhelmed twelve enemy divisions. The fight had been over his chosen ground where he had lavished every art of defense. After the initial surprise of the morning of Sept. 27, it had all been ding-dong uphill work, a battle entirely of infantry and artillery. So great importance had the enemy attached to the position that he had squandered men in its defense on a scale that recalled the early years of the war.

But not then nor for weeks afterward did we realize the magnitude of the victory. It was the last battle on the grand scale in which the Canadian Corps was engaged. Thereafter followed much hard fighting, particularly before Valenciennes, and even up to the very gates of Mons, but it was on a Divisional rather than on a Corps scale. The corner was turned. The enemy was so badly beaten that hereafter his one

desire was to get away, and though he fought stout rearguard actions, they were but in the nature of delaying battles. Pressure was too great and continuous for him to attempt to make a permanent stand. He had had his bellyful of the Canadian Corps. His best divisions had been "washed-out" and could never again take their place in the battle line. The vaunted Hindenburg System was no more. Skilful use though he made of the country, he had no prepared line, no elaborate system of trenches and wire, no nests of concrete machine-gun posts, on which to rally his retreating forces and make a last bid for victory. He was bankrupt both in resources and plan; he had lost so many guns that his gunners were chary of working their batteries from advanced positions; his efforts indeed were devoted to getting back his heavy batteries to safer positions in the rear, and more and more he depended upon his devoted machine-gunners.

The victory was complete indeed; so far as the Canadian Corps was concerned it definitely ended Field Marshal Haig's "first phase"; and its repercussion along the West Front heartened our battling armies and brought dismay to the counsels of the enemy; more perhaps than any other battle of this period, it broke his spirit, weakened his stomach for the fight, and set up that general rot which so soon was to convert his retreat into what was little better than a rout.

But on Oct. 2 we knew nothing of this. The historian, with before him the results of a battle, cannot enter into the feelings of the men who fought it; he cannot envisage their tired bodies and weary spirits; from his wide survey he fails to realize that even as they congratulate themselves on a victory and lick their sores, they are girding themselves for the next great battle. Certainly few in the Canadian Corps could then grasp its full significance. Indeed, we had had such a gruelling, had lost so heavily, that common talk was that we should go out of the line to refit—it was said that already our 1st. Division had been taken out. We knew the Boche was beaten, because, given everything in his favor on that never-to-be-forgotten night of

Oct. 1-2, he had failed to come again, and next day had abandoned to us the bloody field. But we quite expected him to bring up new divisions and throw them in once more.

Battle vision is extremely limited. Every one is intensely engaged on his own particular job; his concentration and preoccupation do not permit him to survey intelligently the front as a whole; he hears, but immediately forgets, that so-and-so on our right is doing great things, and down south the Boche have fallen back many miles; for him the enemy immediately in front is everything; that is the fellow he has to tackle and overcome; and his experience is that when he has done it once he will have to do it all over again a few miles further on. He respects the enemy because he has come to know him as a good fighting man. He cannot understand his psychology; he cannot understand how his machine-gunners, after putting up a desperate resistance and taking terrible toll of our ranks, throw up their hands to the cry of "Kamerad" directly we are on them with bombs and cold steel; but, brave man himself, he admits that up to a certain point—and particularly in those long waves of counter-attack—the Boche is brave too. He cannot, in a word, conceive that the enemy he has fought four years under all sorts of conditions, is about to crumple up and in six weeks time will be content to sign a shameful armistice. He sees going over his head our propaganda balloons and has heard they are doing good work; but then he has picked up German propaganda, and lit his pipe with it.

Such then was the attitude of mind of the regimental officer and the men in the ranks. They were mighty pleased to have given the Boche such a licking but on Oct. 2 they were more intent on fighting their way into comfortable winter quarters in Cambrai than on anything else. Word went round that the British Corps on our left was to winter in Cambrai---we were very peeved.

What then did we think about it all? We thought that so long as fine weather lasted we should punish the Boche as hard as we could, and finish the job next spring, when the American

army would have attained great strength and gained real battle experience. Let us try to put ourselves back into that state of mind.

Captured enemy orders had exhibited desperate efforts to return to the battle tactics of the successful years by abandonment of the principle of the thinly-held screen of machine-guns backed by great depth of defense. This system was adopted as the consequence of weakened man-power resulting from his abortive offensive of the previous summer—the final bid for victory.

His plans were then so perfected, his preparations on such a scale, that he was convinced failure was impossible. He did fail—we are not here concerned with the causes—but he came so perilously near success that the strategic situation on the Marne warranted his throwing in every available bayonet. When it developed that all this tremendous sacrifice of man-power had been in vain, so far from losing heart he took best measures possible to avert defeat and the annihilation of his armies. For his offensive he substituted a mobile defensive, shortening his lines and seeking in every way to economize and augment his depleted man-power.

His chief surprise packet of 1918 was the enormous number of his machine-guns. He proposed in fact to base his defense on machine-gun posts instead of rifles and a better illustration of his system could not offer than the character of the opposition encountered by the Canadian Corps during the Battle of Cambrai. Theoretically a machine-gun every ten yards should have stopped infantry attacking over open ground but in practice it failed.

Failure thus demonstrated he sought to return to defense by the counter-offensive of field-gray masses, as was shown on Oct. 1. Passive defense proved ruinous to his morale; to regain even local initiative he must have something like equality of man-power where its need is supreme—on the shock-front of battle.

A document we captured at Cambrai instructs commanding

officers that they must no longer depend on a perfunctory front line of resistance, nor on outposts of machine-gunners, with infantry supports and reserves deeply echeloned in the rear. The danger is pointed out that the driving in of the light front line tends to create disorder and spread consternation behind. Front lines must be held in force with supports and reserves well forward. Particular attention is to be given to the protection of positions by anti-tank contrivances. Finally the troops are exhorted to die at their posts if they hope to keep the enemy out of the Fatherland.

The result of these admonitions was seen in the Battle of Cambrai. There was a return to infantry counter-attacks. These, in turn, could be afforded only by a shortening of the line. This fierce battle, therefore, which seemed to our men engaged in it but the opening of the most intensive fighting of the campaign, in reality compelled the enemy to begin the retreat he was so soon to inaugurate. We had exhausted his reserves and he must shorten his line. With his back to his own frontier not only would his own line be considerably reduced but he might feel he could count on a corresponding betterment in the morale of his men. From that new orientation he might reason with some plausibility that he could return with success to the counter-offensive and teach the Allies such a lesson that they would be glad to conclude what he considered a reasonable peace.

Well on in October, after his retreat had begun, that was how the situation appeared. If that train of reasoning had hung together, we had still before us some of the hardest fighting of the war. The question was whether the German soldier was capable of such incessant retreats without loss of fighting spirit—could the German psychology, fed on superman doctrines, resist such constant sapping of its faith in its own invincibility? And, again, had Foch the power to turn this ordered retreat into a rout? The answers to these questions were given in the "second phase," now opening for the Canadian Corps.

Such were the obscurities through which we moved, but a great ray of illumination was about to break upon us—had we the wit to seize its significance. This was the first enemy proposal for an armistice.

With the material facts accumulating, the publication of official reports, memoirs and diaries, and those intensely interesting human documents wherein unsuccessful leaders seem compelled to take the world into their confidence, already the task of the historian grows easier and he is able to pierce the veil of mystery that hung before us in early October of 1918.

A notable contribution of this nature is that of Col. Bauer, head of the artillery department at Great General Headquarters, but who is also credited by German public opinion with having been the special confidant and political inspirer of Ludendorff. He has published in pamphlet form the German General Staff's version of the events which led up to the armistice, and from the facts he relates the London *Daily Telegraph* has deduced that it is clear that Ludendorff realized as early as the first half of August, 1918, that the war was lost, and that the request for an armistice was the result of urgent and repeated demands from General Headquarters.

There is nothing in this new to the reader, for we have seen in the account of the Amiens show how after the events of Aug. 8 Ludendorff made up his mind that all hopes of gaining a military decision must be abandoned. But it is extremely interesting and instructive to gather from Col. Bauer's narrative how the immediate effect of the storming of the Canal du Nord by the Canadian Corps was to convince Ludendorff that not a day must elapse if any part of all that had been now lost in battle could be saved by negotiation. Col. Bauer's pamphlet is in part as follows:—

"On June 30, 1918, Herr von Hintze had succeeded Herr von Kuhlmann. It was hoped that he would succeed in spinning peace threads. But nothing became known, although the Government—that is to say, also Herr von Hintze—were thoroughly acquainted with the internal and military situation.

In his judgment of the situation, General Ludendorff was in complete agreement with the departmental chiefs concerned. As early as Aug. 13, that is to say as soon as he had a clear picture as the result of the reports received as to the inglorious Aug. 8, Ludendorff invited the Chancellor and Herr von Hintze to a sitting, and gave them a clear picture of the military situation. On Aug. 14, a fresh discussion took place under the presidency of the Emperor. The Chief Army Command emphasized the necessity of an early conclusion of peace, as we were at the time still strong, but had to reckon with an increasing deterioration of the military situation. Herr von Hintze renewed his promise to initiate peace overtures.

"All through September, the Chief Army Command waited full of anxiety as to what fruits the presumed activity of the Foreign Office would bear. But when four weeks had passed without result, Ludendorff decided, on September 28, 1918, in complete agreement with all the responsible departmental chiefs of the Operation Section, to report to the Field-Marshal that the moment had come to submit to the Imperial Government the demand that peace negotiations should be inaugurated immediately, and for this purpose an armistice proposed to the Entente. The Field-Marshal agreed.

"On Sept. 29 Admiral von Hintze and Count Roedern (Imperial Ministry of Finance), who had been summoned to Spa, arrived at General Headquarters. From utterances of General Ludendorff as to his negotiations with the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, it became known that Hintze had sketched a very gloomy picture of the internal political situation, had described revolution as being at the door, and had proposed an immediate reconstruction of the Government. After this had been confirmed, the military situation and the promotion of the peace step were discussed.

"Thereupon the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs declared that a peace offer could only be made by a new Government, which must be supported by the confidence of the entire people. The old Government, he said, was compromised both

at home and abroad; it was regarded as mendacious and insincere. Herr von Hintze expressed the opinion that a new Government could be formed by Oct. 1. His Majesty the Emperor charged Count Roedern to take in Berlin the necessary steps for the formation of a new Government. The Chief Army Command asked for an acceleration of the formation of the Government. This the State Secretary for Foreign Affairs promised; he said that he anticipated no special difficulties. The Imperial Chancellor, who had arrived at Spa on the afternoon of Sept. 29, took no further action.

"As Ludendorff received news that the negotiations for the formation of the new Government were dragging, he called up his representative in Berlin on Oct. 1, and urged him to put pressure on the Vice-Chancellor, Von Payer. 'Now that the Chief Army Command has come to this grave decision,' he said, 'we must insist that no time is lost.' Payer replied to the representations made to him that there was no one who could sign a peace offer, as the new Chancellor had not yet been appointed, and that he was still uncertain whether he could succeed in forming a Cabinet. He asked whether Headquarters would not agree to a postponement of the peace offer. This suggestion brought him the same day the following peremptory telegram from Hindenburg:

" 'If by between seven and eight o'clock this evening there is the certainty that Prince Max of Baden will form a Government, I agree to a postponement until to-morrow forenoon.

" 'Should, on the other hand, the formation of the Government be in any way doubtful, I consider it necessary to issue the statement to the foreign Governments tonight.' "

"Prince Max arrived in Berlin on the afternoon of Oct. 1, but now a new difficulty arose. Before he could accept the Chancellorship it was necessary for him to have the permission of the Grand Duke of Baden. This could only be obtained through the mediation of the Emperor, who was on the journey from Spa to Berlin. However, the Imperial train was stopped at Cologne, and, by a strenuous use of the telephone, the

Grand Duke's consent was received by midnight. On the following morning at nine o'clock, the representative of Headquarters submitted to the leaders of the Reichstag parties, who met under the chairmanship of the Vice-Chancellor, a report on the situation containing the following notable passages:

" 'The Chief Army Command has been compelled to take a terribly grave decision, and declare that, according to human probabilities, there is no longer any prospect of forcing peace on the enemy.

" 'Above all, two facts have been decisive for this issue. First, the tanks. The enemy has employed them in unexpectedly large numbers. Where, after a very liberal clouding of our positions with artificial mist, they effected a surprise, our men's nerves were often unequal to them. Here they broke through our first line, opened a way for their infantry, appeared in the rear, created local panics, and threw the control of the fighting into confusion. When they had once been identified, our tank-defense weapons and our artillery quickly settled with them. Then, however, the misfortune had already happened, and solely the successes of the tanks explain the large numbers of prisoners which so painfully reduced our strengths, and brought about a more rapid consumption of reserves than we had hitherto been accustomed to.

" 'We were not in a position to oppose to the enemy equal masses of German tanks. Their construction would have exceeded the resources of our industry, which was strained to the uttermost, or other more important things would have had to be neglected.

" 'But it is the reserve situation which has become absolutely decisive. The Army entered the great battle with weak complements. In spite of all the measures adopted, the strength of our battalions sank from about 800 in April to about 540 at the end of September. Moreover, this number could only be maintained by the dissolution of twenty-two infantry divisions, the equivalent of sixty-six infantry regiments.

" 'The Bulgarian defeat devoured seven further divisions.

There is no prospect of bringing the strengths to a higher level. The current enrolments, the convalescents, and the combings-out will not even cover the losses of a tranquil winter campaign. Only the embodiment of the 1900 class will give the battalion strengths a single increase of 100 men. Then our last reserve of men will be exhausted.

" 'The losses in the battle now in progress have been unexpectedly high, especially in officers. More than ever the troops require the example of their officers, whether in defense or attack. The officers had to, and have, recklessly risked and sacrificed themselves. The regimental commanders and higher leaders fought in the front line. Only one example: In two days of battle, one division lost all its officers, killed or wounded. Three regimental commanders were killed. The small body of active officers still available has melted away. The building-up of the divisions coming from the great battle is now hardly practicable. What is true of officers is also true of non-commissioned officers. Through American help the enemy is in a position to replace his losses. American troops as such are not of special value, to say nothing of being superior to ours. Where they attained initial successes by mass tactics they were repulsed in spite of their superiority in numbers. It was, however, decisive that they were able to take over wide stretches of front, and thus give the English and French the possibility to set free their own battle-tried divisions and create for themselves almost inexhaustible reserves.

" 'So far, our reserves have sufficed to fill the gaps. The railway brought them up promptly. Assaults of unparalleled severity were repulsed. The battles are described as of unexampled severity. Now our reserves are coming to an end. If the enemy continues to attack, the situation may demand that we retire fighting along large stretches of the front. In this way, we can continue the war for an indefinite time, impose heavy losses on the enemy, and leave behind us devastated country, but that can no longer give us victory.

" 'These perceptions and events brought to maturity in the

minds of the General-Field-Marshal and General Ludendorff the decision, to propose to the Emperor to attempt to break off the struggle, in order to spare the German nation and its allies further sacrifices.

" 'Just as our great offensive of July 15 was immediately broken off when its continuation was no longer commensurate with the necessary sacrifices, even so it has now become necessary to abandon the continuation of the war as hopeless (aussichtslos). We still have time for this. The German army is still strong enough to delay the enemy for months, to attain local successes, and to confront the Entente with fresh sacrifices. But every additional day brings the enemy nearer to the goal, and will make him less inclined to conclude a peace which would be tolerable for us.

" 'Therefore no time must be lost. Any twenty-four hours may change the situation for the worse, and give the enemy a chance of clearly recognizing our present weakness. That might have the most disastrous consequences for the prospects of peace as for the military situation.' "

Commenting on this, the *Daily Telegraph* says:—"From Col. Bauer's narrative and the documents which he cites, it is established beyond controversy that Prince Max's request for a cessation of hostilities, sent off on the night of Oct. 4-5, was the result of the action not of the politicians, but of the generals, and that the motive behind it was the realization that Germany had been beaten in the field and could only escape appalling military disaster by the transfer of the struggle from the battleground to the green table."

Any hopes that Ludendorff may have had of being able to stem the tide were finally wrecked in this battle of Cambrai. The Canadian Corps had done far more than break down the defense on their front; they had pierced through his entire system, had cut off his armies in the north from his armies in the south, and had turned the Hindenburg Line so that thereafter our Third and Fourth Armies were able to march forward, capturing towns and villages, and encountering for the

most part but enemy rearguards, fighting delaying actions. Only at St. Quentin was a real organized defense offered, and that soon broke down before the valor of British and Australian troops.

CHAPTER XI

THE CORPS COMMANDER

ON Oct. 3 the Corps Commander issued the following special order to the troops of his command:—

"I wish to express to all troops now fighting in the Canadian Corps my high appreciation of the splendid fighting qualities displayed by them in the successful battle of the last five days.

"The mission assigned to the Corps was the protection of the flank of the Third and Fourth Armies in their advance, and that mission has been carried out to the complete satisfaction of the Commander-in-Chief.

"In your advance you overcame the very formidable obstacle of the Canal du Nord; you carried by assault the fortified Bourlon Wood, the Marcoing line, and seized the high ground extending along the Douai—Cambrai road. The towns of Oisy-le-Verger, Epinoy, Haynecourt, Marquion, Sains-lez-Marquion, Sancourt, Bourlon, Fontaine-Notre-Dame, Raillencourt, Sailly, St. Olle, Neuville St. Remy, and Tilloy are now ours, and your patrols have entered Cambrai itself.

"How arduous was the task assigned to you, and how valuable to the enemy was the ground that you captured, can be judged by the fact that whereas in the operations of the First, Third and Fourth British Armies 36 enemy divisions have been engaged to this date, 12 of those divisions, supported by 11 independent machine-gun units, have been met and defeated by the Canadian Corps.

"As you formed the flank you suffered enfilade and frontal artillery fire all the way, and the hundreds of machine-guns captured testifies to the violence of the opposition from that source. Every evidence confirms the fact that the enemy suf-

fered enormous casualties. He fought stubbornly and well, and for that reason your victory is the more creditable.

"You have taken in this battle over 7,000 prisoners and 200 Field and Heavy guns, thus bringing the total captures of the Canadian Corps since Aug. 8 of this year to 28,000 prisoners, 500 guns, over 3,000 machine-guns, and a large amount of stores of all kinds.

"Even of greater importance than these captures stands the fact that you have wrested 69 towns and villages and over 175 square miles of French soil from the defiling Hun.

"In the short period of two months the Canadian Corps—to which were attached the 32nd. Division for the Battle of Amiens, the 4th. and the 51st. Divisions for the Battle of Arras, and the 11th. Division for this Battle of Cambrai—has encountered and defeated decisively 47 German divisions—that is nearly a quarter of the total German forces on the Western front.

"In the performance of these mighty achievements all the arms and branches of the Corps have bent their purposeful energy working one for all and all for one.

"The dash and magnificent bravery of our incomparable Infantry have at all times been devotedly seconded with great skill and daring by our Machine-Gunners, while the Artillery lent them their powerful and never failing support. The initiative and resourcefulness displayed by the Engineers contributed materially to the depth and rapidity of our advances. The devotion of the Medical personnel has been, as always, worthy of our praise. The administrative services, working at all times under very great pressure and adverse conditions, surpassed their usual efficiency. The Chaplain Services by their continued devotion to the spiritual welfare of the troops and their utter disregard of personal risk have endeared themselves to the hearts of everyone. The incessant efforts of the Y.M.C.A. and their initiative in bringing comforts right up to the front line, in battle, are warmly appreciated by all.

"The victories you have achieved are the fruit of the iron

discipline you accepted freely and of the high standard you have reached in the technical knowledge of your arms and the combined tactical employment of all your resources.

"You must therefore with relentless energy maintain and perfect the high standard of training you have reached, and guard with jealous pride your stern discipline.

"Under the lasting protection of Divine Providence, united in a burning desire for the victory of right over might, unselfish in your aims, you are and shall remain a mighty force admired by all, feared and respected by foes.

"I am proud of your deeds and I want to record here my heart-felt thanks for your generous efforts and my unbounded confidence in your ability to fight victoriously and crush the enemy wherever and whenever you meet him."

The great spirit and high purpose of Sir Arthur Currie shine out through these words. He had reason indeed for pride in the achievements of his command, and he gives generous and unstinted praise to all arms. In a great measure, as we have seen, it was his own battle, planned by himself, a daring piece of strategy whose even partial failure must have meant ruin almost irretrievable. That risk he faced because of his faith in the men they led, in their courage and high state of efficiency, but in those five critical days he must have passed many anxious hours. For long victory hung in the scales. It was such a crisis as Grant had in his mind when he wrote in his memoirs that in every well-contested battle there comes a moment when the combatants on both sides become exhausted, and the general who at that moment first finds it in his heart to make one more effort will generally succeed. By nightfall of Oct. 1 the enemy was exhausted and the battle won.

The men of the Canadian Corps were very wonderful, but they owed much—more perhaps than the Canadian public realize—to their Commander. "Even a professional army of long standing and old traditions is what its commander makes it," wrote the late Col. G. F. R. Henderson in his history, *Stonewall Jackson and the American Civil War*. "Its char-

acter sooner or later becomes the reflex of his own; from him the officers take their tone; his energy or his inactivity, his firmness or vacillation, are rapidly communicated even to the lower ranks; and so far-reaching is the influence of the leader, that those who record his campaigns concern themselves but little as a rule with the men who followed him. The history of famous armies is the history of great generals, for no army has ever achieved great things unless it has been well commanded. If the general be second-rate the army also will be second-rate. Mutual confidence is the basis of success in war, and unless the troops have implicit trust in the resolution and resources of their chief, hesitation and half-heartedness are sure to mark their actions. They may fight with their accustomed courage; but the eagerness of the conflict, the alacrity to support, the determination to conquer, will not be there. The indefinable quality which is expressed by the word *moral* will to some degree be affected." And the writer goes on to quote the proud words of Jackson, so applicable to the Canadian Corps: "My men sometimes fail to drive the enemy from his position, but to hold one, never!"

Foch, that great master of the art of war, once said in the course of his lectures to the French Staff College: "Who says Chief means a man of character; that goes without saying; but means also a man capable of understanding and contriving in order to obey."* And in another place: "To be disciplined does not mean that the soldier commits no fault against discipline, that he commits no disorder. To be disciplined does not mean that the soldier executes the orders received in such measure as seems convenient, just, rational or possible; but that he enters frankly into the thought and into the views of the Chief who has given the order, that he takes all the steps humanly practicable to give his Chief satisfaction. To be disciplined does not mean to keep silence, to abstain from action, or to do that only which the soldier thinks he may do without

*"The Philosophy of General Foch", by Charles Whitley. Blackwood's Magazine, June, 1918.

compromising himself; it is not the art of avoiding responsibilities, but rather of acting in the sense of the order received, and for that purpose of finding in the mind, by research and reflection, the possibility of carrying these orders out, of finding in the character the energy to face the risks which the execution of the orders involve."

Foch quotes with approval the saying of Joseph de Maistre: "A battle lost is a battle which the army believes to be lost, for a battle cannot be lost materially." Conversely: "A battle gained is a battle in which the army refuses to admit itself beaten."

Foch goes on to say: "No victory can be won without a vigorous command, greedy of responsibilities and ready for bold enterprises, possessing and inspiring in all the energy and resolution to go to the very end; without personal action rendered in good will, without judgment, without freedom of spirit (in the midst of danger)—gifts natural in the highly endowed man, in the general born; advantages acquired by work and reflection in the ordinary man."

Sir Arthur Currie took his life and reputation in his hands when he decided to attack the Canal du Nord at Inchy. If he had failed he would have been covered with shame and obloquy. He had been warned, as we have seen, by Sir Julian Byng of the formidable nature of his self-appointed task; indeed it is not too much to say that at that time no other troops in Europe could have undertaken with confidence that astonishing feat of arms. Not only did the device meet with entire success, but it saved many thousands of casualties that must have been fruitlessly incurred if the Corps Commander had stuck by his book—by the letter of his orders—and thrown the Corps into a second Passchendaele at the flooded triangle of the Sensee and the Canal du Nord.

He thus gave proof of the highest discipline and obedience as defined by Foch himself, but, to put it mildly, this was not the definition that prevailed in the British armies, where the bad old tradition, "Theirs not to reason why," too often and

too completely obtained. The Canadian Corps, with its aggressive Commander, could not therefore have been popular with the higher command. It was always stepping out of its routine course, its prescribed battle area, and butting into other people's territory and field of activity; and in so doing it was inevitable that certain corns were trodden upon, certain susceptibilities bruised, certain reputations imperilled.

In time the people of Canada will come to realize how great a figure Sir Arthur Currie was on the west front, how his commanding personality on the one hand, his passionate devotion to his men on the other, coupled with the unique reputation the Canadian Corps had won as storm troops and its independence of command in the sense that it was not permanently attached to any particular army, but was thrown in wherever need was greatest—made him something more than a Corps Commander in the ordinary sense; made him in the closing months of the war a force to be reckoned with and even on occasion placated. Had the war continued he might have gone far, his military genius recognized, his vigorous leadership proved, save that there must have still attached to him the proud disability of being a Canadian citizen-soldier.

But according to the letter of the law, he is not a good subordinate. He cannot be popular with the powers that be; he is always complaining about something; getting his own way or making it unpleasant for people if he doesn't. Thus, when ordered to abandon his planned offensive at Lens and take the Corps up to the Salient, he refuses point blank to serve under the Commander of the Fifth Army. He is placed under his old chief of First Army, looks over the ground before Passchendaele and then protests against the whole operation as being useless in itself and likely to cost the Corps 15,000 casualties. But he is told it must be done—there are compelling political reasons; for after the terrible battles of 1917 the morale of both the British and French armies is low, and it is essential to finish the season with a victory. The thrice-accursed Passhendaele Ridge must be taken. So he sets about to

make of it the best job possible, and on that stricken field the Canadian Corps plants again the standard of hope in the heart of the Allies.

Then, in the panic of the following March, he finds the Corps is being torn to pieces, its Divisions hurried here, there and everywhere; orders given and countermanded and then issued again. He protests strongly; the Canadian Corps—whose value is tested—must be kept together; and he wins out.

Again, in the Amiens show, he protests at the strength of the Corps—now it has performed its allotted task—being whittled away in secondary but expensive operations in front of Roye; and proposes instead a drive on Bapaume. He ventures to make the suggestion that he believes, "if we made an attack on the Third Army front in the direction of Bapaume, and in conjunction with an attack by the French from their present line, we could force the Boche to evacuate the positions he holds on this side of the Somme without ever attacking him." And this is exactly what did happen, though, as we have seen, the Canadian Corps was transferred to the Arras rather than the Albert sector.

Finally we arrive at that "neck of the woods," the flooded triangle of the Sensee and Canal du Nord. He says that it cannot and will not be done by the Canadian Corps. But he proposes an alternative; and goes in and wins. After the battle, a British Army Commander, in no way connected with the operation, said that the attack of the Canadian Corps across the Canal du Nord, with the subsequent extension of our line, was the most brilliantly executed manoeuvre in the history of this war.

Is all this insubordination? If so it is a quality that makes for victory. The average Canadian is always willing "to take a chance," because he has confidence in himself. And the Corps Commander is very much a Canadian. He was not to be bound by precept, nor tradition nor red tape. If he has a job to do, he must go about it his own way and no other. As Zenophen puts it: "The art of war is to guard one's liberty of action."

Clausewitz in his book, "On War," enters very fully into the qualities of the successful commander. "Military genius," he says, "consists in a harmonious association of qualities of which one or another may predominate, but none must be in opposition. It is not the possession of one single quality such as courage, for this might exist whilst other necessary qualities of mind and soul were wanting."

After discussing physical and moral courage, he proceeds: "The next requisites for war are a certain strength of body and also of mind, both of which are necessary to overcome the physical exertion and suffering inseparable from war. Another essential is good, sound common sense. With the above qualifications a man is fairly equipped for war, but to be a great commander he requires to have his understanding highly developed. Now, if a commander is to succeed in this perpetual conflict with the unexpected, two essential qualities are what the French call 'coup d'oeil' and resolution. By 'coup d'oeil' is meant a correct survey not only by the physical but also by the mental eye. A more modern expression for this is a quick and correct appreciation of the situation. Resolution is courage in the face of responsibility and springs from the understanding, but mere intelligence is not courage, and many clever men are often without resolution. We must always guard against the fact that in great emergencies a man is apt to be swayed more by his feelings than by carefully reasoned thought. Resolution is the child of the intellect and the outcome of reasoned thought backed up by a will determined to carry out what reason dictates. . . .

"If we take a general view of the four elements composing the atmosphere in which war moves, namely, danger, physical effort, uncertainty and chance, it is easy to conceive that considerable moral forces are necessary to confront them, and these qualities are best described as energy, firmness, staunchness and strength of mind and character. All these qualities are nearly related but are by no means the same thing. Energy is an active quality and one which a commander who is him-

self imbued with it can infuse into his subordinates. Firmness denotes the resistance of the will in relation to the force of a single blow, staunchness in relation to a continuance of blows. A strong mind is one which though capable of deep feelings never loses its self-command and in which the perception and judgment are able, under all conditions, to act with perfect freedom, like the needle of a compass in a storm-tossed ship, and which can retain its serenity under the most powerful excitement. Strength of character means tenacity of conviction, whether it be the result of our own or others' views."

Clausewitz goes on to say how necessary it is for the commander to have "an eye for country" and he points out the difference between the qualities for subordinate and high command in the following terms:—"It is true that a man may be a brave, plain, honest soldier without being possessed of much power of reflection, resource or fine education, but these qualities do not by any means suffice for a man who aspires to acquit himself creditably in the higher ranks of the army. Each grade of command demands different qualities in different proportions, and an extra step in rank often loses for a man the reputation he had justly earned in a subordinate position."

By these standards General Currie measures high as soldier and leader. At the beginning of the war it would have seemed incredible that a civilian could within so short a space rise to such military eminence.

In this connection a sketch of his pre-war military career is of interest. Born at Napperton, Ont., Dec. 5, 1875, Arthur William Currie is of Irish-Canadian parentage, his father's family emigrating to the Eastern Townships of Quebec in 1830. In 1893 he went west, teaching school at Sydney, B.C., and then followed some years of active business life, in real estate and finance.

In 1897 he enlisted in the 5th. Regiment of Canadian Garrison Artillery, and three years later qualified for his commission as a gunner, obtaining his captaincy in 1902. Always keen on the rifle, in 1905 he was elected president of

the British Columbia Rifle Association, and in the following year was awarded his majority. Four years later Lt.-Col. Currie was appointed to the command of the 5th. C. G. A., and in 1913 he took command of an infantry battalion, the 50th. Regiment, Gordon Highlanders.

A few days after the war opened, he took his battalion to Valcartier, training ground of the First Canadian Contingent, and next month was appointed Brig.-General of the 2nd. Canadian Infantry Brigade. In February, 1915, he crossed over with his command to France. Mentioned in despatches in June for his conduct on the battlefield, General Currie in the following September was appointed commander of the 1st. Canadian Division, which he held until when, after Vimy in 1917, he succeeded Sir Julian Byng in command of the Canadian Corps.

Given a natural military genius, confirmed by long years of study of military problems, and such continuity of training as our militia cadres afford, and add to these four years of actual battle experience, and the thing is not so impossible. Sir Arthur Currie, indeed, is not the only example the war offers of a great citizen soldier, but he was fortunate that throughout his successive steps in command he had at his control a weapon inferior to none. When at last he came into command of the Canadian Corps, he had the imagination to look ahead and foresee the day when it might be called upon to break down the seeming impregnable wall the enemy had built across the western front, and this purpose he kept always before him. Hardly had the bloody wounds of Passchendaele healed than he is at work training reinforcements, and infusing through all ranks the theory and spirit of the offensive, making ready for the day that even in those dark weeks of March he saw faintly adumbrated upon the battle scene.

Nothing, indeed, is more characteristic than the special order he issued his troops on March 27, 1918, at an hour when many stout hearts quaked. It ran as follows:

"In an endeavor to reach an immediate decision the enemy

has gathered all his forces and struck a mighty blow at the British Army. Overwhelmed by sheer weight of numbers the British Divisions in the line between the Scarpe and the Oise have fallen back fighting hard, steady and undismayed.

"Measures have been taken successfully to meet this German onslaught. The French have gathered a powerful Army, commanded by a most able and trusted leader, and this Army is now moving swiftly to our help. Fresh British Divisions are being thrown in. The Canadians are soon to be engaged. Our Motor Machine-Gun Brigade has already played a most gallant part and once again covered itself with glory.

"Looking back with pride on the unbroken record of your glorious achievements, asking you to realize that today the fate of the British Empire hangs in the balance, I place my trust in the Canadian Corps, knowing that where Canadians are engaged there can be no giving way.

"Under the orders of your devoted officers in the coming battle you will advance or fall where you stand facing the enemy.

"To those who will fall I say, 'You will not die but step into immortality. Your mothers will not lament your fate but will be proud to have borne such sons. Your names will be revered forever and ever by your grateful country and God will take you unto Himself.'

"Canadians, in this fateful hour, I command you and I trust you to fight as you have ever fought with all your strength, with all your determination, with all your tranquil courage. On many a hard fought field of battle you have overcome this enemy. With God's help you shall achieve victory once more."

This sincere simple piety is an essential part of the man. It is the fibre of his being and in the hour of distress he turns naturally and with complete faith to a higher power. It is impossible to be long in contact with him without being convinced that here is a rock of a man, strong of soul, direct, straightforward, marching straight to the goal, abhorrent of

devious paths, yet very human, stern of purpose but with a deep well of tenderness that suffers with his men and seeks continually to spare them on any terms short of treachery to the cause. Big in mind and spirit as in body, he is actuated through all these hard days by but a single motive—the honor of the Canadian Corps and the defeat of the enemy.

CHAPTER XII

CAPTURE OF CAMBRAI

FOR some days now we had held the west side of the Scheldt Canal, from south of St. Olle through Neuville St. Remy, and continual sniping went on between troops of the 8th. Brigade, C. M. R.'s, Brig.-General D. C. Draper, and enemy machine-gunners posted opposite in the suburbs of Cambrai. But to storm the city by a frontal attack across the canal, and then to fight our way through its narrow streets, must have proved a very expensive operation without any commensurate gain. Great flares showed that the enemy was systematically destroying his stores, and in two or three districts fire seemed to have hold of the houses.

The city itself is dominated by the height to the southeast lying between the villages of Biergnies and Awoignt, and it was decided that our attack should await the capture of this height by the XVII Corps on our right. Progress here, however, was slow, and the combined operation set for Oct. 8 failed to come off on that account. Had the troops on our right succeeded in capturing Awoignt in their attack of that morning, the Canadian Corps was to attack at nine o'clock the same evening the bridgeheads from the north under cover of darkness. But though Awoignt was not taken, it was pretty certain that the attention of the enemy was focussed on that battle front, and the occasion therefore appearing propitious, it was decided late the same night to attack in the small hours of next morning. Arrangements had to be completed in a great hurry. The Corps Commander describes the events of this period as follows:

"The 2nd. Canadian Division had been in close support throughout the day of Oct. 1, and during the night, Oct. 1-2, relieved the 4th. Canadian Division and parts of the 3rd. and

1st. Canadian Divisions in the line from the railway south of Tilloy to Blecourt, inclusive. On relief, the 4th. Canadian Division came into Corps Reserve in bivouacs in the Inchy-Queant area.

"The relief considerably thinned out the Infantry, and in anticipation of possible counter-attacks a large number of Machine-Gun Batteries were placed in the line.

"Oct. 2 passed without any substantial change in the situation. The enemy's Artillery was very active throughout the day, and at 6.15 p.m. he delivered a determined counter-attack, with a force estimated at about a Battalion strong, against the ridge northeast of Tilloy, on the 2nd. Canadian Division front. This counter-attack was repulsed with heavy loss to the enemy.

"During the night, Oct. 2-3, the 11th. Division extended its frontage to the right as far as Blecourt (inclusive), relieving the remainder of the 1st. Canadian Division, who came into Corps Reserve west of the Canal on completion of the relief.

"The dispositions of the Canadian Corps at noon, Oct. 3, were as follows:—

"In the line—the 3rd. Canadian Division on the right on a one-Brigade front, from the Arras—Cambrai railway to the Cambrai—Douai railway south of Tilloy; the 2nd. Canadian Division in the centre, on a two-Brigade front, extending to the northern outskirts of Blecourt, and the 11th. Division on the left continuing the line to a point 1,000 yards south of Aubencheul-au-Bac.

"In Corps Reserve—the 1st. and 4th. Canadian Divisions. The latter was moved to billets in the Haute Avesnes—Arras area on the night of Oct. 7-8 to give more opportunity to rest and refit.

"The period from Oct. 3 to 8 passed without any material changes on the Corps front. An enemy counter-attack was beaten off by the 2nd. Canadian Division opposite Bantigny on the morning of Oct. 4, and the 11th. Division considerably improved the line on the northern flank by successful minor operations on Oct. 5 and 6.

"Many patrol encounters took place, in which some prisoners were captured, and our Artillery and Machine-Guns kept the enemy under continual harassing fire day and night. In addition, our Heavy Artillery carried out a daily programme of gas concentrations and counter-battery shoots.

"Orders were received on Oct. 3 for the relief of the Corps by the XXII Corps. Concurrently with this relief, and as it progressed, the Canadian Corps was to take over the front of the XXII Corps.

"Plans for further operations having been formulated to take place on the Third Army front, the Canadian Corps was ordered on Oct. 5 to co-operate by forcing the crossings of the Scheldt Canal north of Cambrai, and the relief contemplated was, therefore, postponed.

"The Third Army had been successful in crossing the Scheldt Canal south of Cambrai between Crevecoeur and Proville. The operation now contemplated had for object the capture of Cambrai by envelopment. This was to be carried out in two phases.

"In the first phase the XVII Corps was to capture Awoignt by attacking from the south, the Canadian Corps was to cooperate by an Artillery demonstration. In the second phase the Canadian Corps was to cross the Scheldt Canal and, advancing rapidly, capture Escaudoeuvres, joining hands with the XVII Corps northeast of Cambrai.

"The positions occupied by the 3rd. and 2nd. Canadian Divisions were not favorable for an attack by day; the 3rd. Canadian Division was in front of Cambrai, and house-to-house fighting was out of the question; the 2nd. Canadian Division was separated from the Canal by glacis-like slopes, devoid of cover, and on which the enemy had good observation from the numerous houses on the east side of the Canal as well as from the high ground east of Escaudoeuvres. In addition, Morenchies, Pont d'Aire, Ramillies, and the villages to the north were strongly held by the enemy.

"In spite of the difficulties of a night operation it was

decided that the 2nd Canadian Division would attack by night, and attempt to seize the bridges before they were blown up by the enemy.

"The 3rd. Canadian Division was to cover the right of the 2nd. Canadian Division by capturing the railway embankment, and entering Cambrai as soon as possible to prevent any action of the enemy against the right flank of the 2nd. Canadian Division, which, under the best circumstances, was bound to be in the air for some time after the crossing of the Canal.

"Brutinel's Brigade was to cross the Canal as soon as possible, and extend the gains of the 2nd. Canadian Division by seizing the high ground east of Thun St. Martin. Ten Brigades of Field Artillery were available for the operation."

During the previous weeks we had made a number of set attacks just before dawn, but an attack at dead of night was a novelty. The 2nd. Canadian Division held a line from Tilloy to just west of Blecourt, and the direction of their attack, with "zero" at 1.30 a.m., was to be due east. In order to distinguish one another all the troops attacking were equipped with white brassards on both arms. The pass-word of "Cambrai" was first selected, but owing to possible confusion with the familiar cry, "Kamerad," it was changed to "Borden." There had been a careful preliminary rehearsal, in anticipation of the attack set for the previous evening, with a plotting out of positions for each platoon, for the advance must be made by compass alone and everything depended on its orderly progress and the avoidance of confusion.

The 5th. Brigade, Brig.-General T. L. Tremblay, was entrusted with the attack on the right on the bridgeheads, the Battalions in the line being the 25th., Nova Scotia, and 26th., New Brunswick, with the 22nd., French Canadians, in support and the 24th., Victoria Rifles of Montreal, holding the line in reserve. In the dark it was impossible to mop-up and garrisons were left at stated intervals to deal with pockets of the enemy.

Advance of the infantry through the pitch dark of a rainy

night could not be synchronized to anything in the nature of a creeping barrage, and so instead the artillery laid down crashes on selected areas. Everything went well from the start. Our patrols had reported that the Boche were holding the sunken road west of Ramillies and the road thence running along the left bank of the canal to Morenchies Wood. On this area our Artillery laid a crash for ten minutes, then lifting their fire on to the line of the canal itself.

Our men found that the enemy garrisons had been either wiped out or had fled, and advanced without opposition to the canal, the first objective, which was reached on the minute. It was of the greatest importance that a crossing should be made practical immediately, so that the attack could be pushed forward behind Cambrai itself. For this purpose Canadian Engineers advanced with the infantry, bringing cork floats and bridging material. Pont d'Aire is a series of three bridges, leading directly into Escaudoeuvres, and this was the scene of a brilliant exploit by an Engineer officer, Capt. Coulson Norman Mitchell, commanding the Tunnel Company, 4th. Battalion, Canadian Engineers, and a native of Winnipeg, Man. He led a small party ahead of the first wave of infantry in order to examine the various bridges on the line of approach, and, if possible, prevent their destruction. Coming to the Pont d'Aire, he found the first bridge already blown. Under a heavy barrage he crossed to the next bridge where he cut a number of "lead" wires. Then, in total darkness and unaware of the position or strength of the enemy at the bridgehead, he dashed across the main bridge over the canal. This bridge was found to be heavily charged for demolition and whilst Capt. Mitchell, assisted by his N. C. O., was cutting the wires, the enemy attempted to rush the bridge in order to blow up the charges, whereupon he at once dashed to the help of his sentry, who had been wounded, killed three of the enemy, captured twelve and maintained the bridgehead until reinforced. Then, under heavy fire, he continued his task of cutting wires and removing the charges that he well knew at any moment might

have been fired by the enemy, hurling his party and himself into the air. He had thus saved two of the bridges, and shortened by some hours the work of repair.

The artillery now laid down a barrage for two hours along the far side of the canal, giving our Engineers time to lay their crossings. Both the 25th. and 26th. Battalions crossed over the Pont d'Aire before 4.30 a.m., and proceeded to their final objective, which was reached an hour later, before dawn. This was 4,000 yards beyond the Scheldt with outposts pushed out another 1,000 yards. Strict orders had been given the 5th. Brigade that none of its troops were to enter Cambrai; otherwise they could have penetrated from the north at the same time, as will be seen later, that the 8th. Brigade was making good its entry from the west. In this very brilliant night operation over 300 prisoners were captured and many machine-guns, our own casualties being practically nil. Many more prisoners were mopped-up by the garrisons as soon as daylight appeared.

But this feat of arms by no means exhausted the work of the 2nd. Canadian Division that night. The 4th. Brigade, to which Brig.-General C. E. McQuaig had succeeded to the command on the appointment of Brig.-General R. Rennie to a command in England, was held in reserve, but the 6th. Brigade, now commanded by Brig.-General A. Ross, Brig.-General A. H. Bell having been wounded, was set the important task of forming a left flank for the operation against the canal. The Brigade kicked-off from a line east and southeast of Sancourt, and advanced to its first objective, a line a thousand yards southeast of Blecourt, and then started to build up a flank from that point in a straight line to Ramillies.

The advance began shortly after the attack of the 5th. Brigade had developed, with the 31st. Battalion, of Alberta, on the right, and the 27th. Battalion, of Winnipeg, on the left, the 29th. Battalion, Vancouver, in close support, and the 28th. Battalion, Regina, mopping-up. The 27th. pushed right on into Ramillies, where a number of prisoners were captured.

This important bridgehead being secured, the 29th. and 31st. built up the flank facing northeast, but as it was apparent that the enemy was taken completely by surprise by this unexpected night attack, our advantage was exploited to the utmost, and our troops by noon had pushed on and captured in succession Blecourt, Bantigny, Cuvillers and Eswars. At the same time the 11th. British Division on our left attacked and took the high ground and the hitherto impregnable village of Abancourt. Thus, at one stroke we secured the plateau which had been the scene of such terrible fighting the previous week. The enemy had withdrawn the bulk of his forces across the Scheldt and his rearguard was driven in with very little loss to ourselves.

Meanwhile the 3rd. Canadian Division had crossed the canal and captured the city itself. The 8th. Brigade was holding the west side of the canal, the 5th. C.M.R., Eastern Townships, being at St. Olle, when at three o'clock of this same morning orders came to send a patrol across the canal with the view of establishing a bridgehead beyond. Two of our men swam the canal, landed on the other side, and proceeded to bomb out the enemy machine-gun post known to be established at the railway bridgehead. But they found the post deserted. The enemy had evacuated the city half an hour after midnight. Linked arm in arm, our infantry streamed over this broken-down bridge and by 4.30 a.m. two companies were across.

By six o'clock Canadian Engineers had constructed a pontoon bridge, over which our field batteries crossed, and by 6.30 a.m. we had penetrated the Place d'Armes and an officer's patrol was sent to inform our surprised neighbors, troops of the XVII Corps on our right, that we were in possession. The 4th. C.M.R., Central Ontario, had been simultaneously engaged in penetrating the city from the northeast and by 10.30 a.m. we had pushed through to the southern and eastern outskirts. Captures consisted of an officer and 35 men of a Guards Reserve Division, left behind to complete the destruc-

tion of the city, with five guns, a pineapple and a number of machine-guns. The rest of his material the enemy had either removed or destroyed. The capture of Cambrai was accomplished without a single casualty.

But Cambrai had been delivered over to destruction. We had been compelled to level with our artillery a street of houses along the canal, and had sprayed shrapnel on commanding points whence the enemy had kept up a harassing machine-gun fire, but otherwise we had been careful not to damage the city. As we entered it the darkness of night was lit up by incendiary fires. The Place d'Armes, a noble square, on which faced the Hotel de Ville and other fine buildings, was already bursting into flames and in a few hours was a crumbling ruin. Explosions detonated in almost every quarter of the city. Walking down the Rue de Noyon and the Rue de Paris past the Cathedral one noted a dozen in a bare half hour, each followed by an outbreak of fire. Before long Canadian Engineers were on the scene, searching buildings for incendiary shells set with a time fuse, the method of destruction adopted.

By noon the Place d' Armes was a scene of desolation, of charred brick and smoldering timbers. The sun hung a fiery ball amid the smoke and an atmosphere surcharged with the dust of rocking walls and charred particles. Through this ruddy haze passed Canadian soldiers wearing "pickel" helmets found in an abandoned quartermaster's stores and loaded down with enemy gear; through it hurried Canadian Engineers, now bent on blowing up burning houses clustering round the ancient belfry that that at least might be saved; through it paced a little party headed by a venerable figure, M. Thuliez, Abbe of St. Drouin, surveying the ruin that had overtaken his diocesan capital. The inhabitants had been evacuated but a few days before—the miserable remnant that was left—but he had refused to go, although they threatened to shoot him, because he must stay by the bedside of a dying woman. Now he was accompanied by half a dozen shadowy figures who had remained hid in cellars, and by a bearded

French officer, who had arrived as representative of the French Government.

"France can never forget nor forgive this," remarked this officer with tears in his eyes. "Torch in hand he comes offering us peace." It was a vile, purposeless act of vandalism, for which General von Marwitz was the Army Commander responsible. A west wind was then blowing and the entire city with its suburbs appeared doomed. A shift of wind that night, together with the tireless efforts of Canadian Engineers, assisted by two of our infantry battalions detailed for the work, finally checked the conflagration. But the heart of the city was gone. Everything of interest, of historical value, save the belfry, was destroyed. The Boche had deliberately blown up the museum, the gallery of art and the Bishop's Palace, but one may be certain it was not until every article of value had been removed. All industries had been wrecked and the machinery of the lace factories removed to Germany.

And this malignant spite was by no means confined to public institutions. No sooner was the civilian population evacuated, than their homes were given over to sack by the soldiery. Outwardly the streets and houses bore a respectable appearance; within all was litter and ruin where the lust of loot led to senseless and wanton destruction, the kicking-in of furniture too heavy to move, the smashing of heavy mirrors, the slashing of family portraits. Almost every little back garden was the scene of brutal vandalism. Women's clothing, children's toys, pictures ripped from their frames, broken services of china, feather-beds ripped open, books, bed linen, private papers scattered from their files—all are piled in one common ruin. On this debris everything portable in the house has been piled, no doubt with the intention of setting it on fire. But search the heap and you will not find a single article of intrinsic value that could have found its way into a soldier's knapsack, into a Prussian officer's kit. In the parks even the statues had been taken from their pedestals. We had heard of these things; now we saw them.

While Cambrai burned, the enemy was falling back. The 5th. Brigade had meantime pushed through the northern suburbs of Cambrai and Escaudoeuvres and crossed the railway to where late in the day at the factory northwest of Cauroir our troops joined hands with elements of the XVII Corps, who, after taking Awoignt, had worked round east of the city. Patrols were pushed out but had difficulty in getting in touch with the enemy. On the left the 6th. Brigade had pushed out by nightfall to the outskirts of Thun St. Martin and Thun l'Eveque. Earlier in the day Brutinel's Brigade had seized the high ground of Croix-St. Hubert. As the Canadian Independent Force this Brigade, with its powerful armored cars, had done much good work in the Amiens show and elsewhere. Its mobile characteristics were to become increasingly valuable in the open fighting to follow.

With the fall of Cambrai the battle proper of that name may be regarded as having ended, though, as we shall see, during the next few days the 2nd. Canadian Division was to continue the pursuit of the beaten enemy. Sir Arthur Currie's despatch covering the operation of Oct. 9 is as follows:—

"At 4.30 a.m., Oct. 8, the Third Army attacked, and at the same hour an artillery demonstration was carried out on the Canadian Corps front.

"The XVII Corps on the right did not reach Awoignt, but in the evening they were ordered to continue their advance on the morning of Oct. 9 to capture this town; concurrently with this advance the Canadian Corps was to secure the crossings of the Scheldt Canal.

"In spite of the darkness of a rainy night the assembly was completed, and the attack was launched successfully at 1.30 a.m., Oct. 9. Rapid progress was made, and at 2.25 a.m. the 2nd. Canadian Division had captured Ramillies and established posts on the Canal there, and patrols were pushing out to the northeast. On the right the Infantry, assisted by a party of Engineers, rushed the crossings at Pont d'Aire, and, after sharp fighting, captured the bridge intact, with the exception

of the western spillway, which had been partially destroyed. Two cork bridges were thrown across, and by 3.35 a.m. our Infantry were well established on the eastern side of the Canal. The 3rd. Canadian Division had cleared the railway, and their patrols were pushing into Cambrai, while the Engineers were commencing work on the bridges.

"By 8 a.m. the 2nd. Canadian Division had captured Escaudoeuvres, and had established a line on the high ground immediately to the north and east. Detachments of the 3rd. Canadian Division had by this time completely cleared Cambrai of the enemy, and troops of the Third Army could be seen coming up towards it from the south.

"Cambrai was to be deliberately set on fire by the enemy. Huge fires were burning in the Square when our patrols went through, and many others broke out in all parts of the city. Piles of inflammable material were found ready for the torch, but the enemy was unable to carry out his intention owing to our unexpected attack and rapid progress. A party of one officer and a few men, which had been left with instructions to set fire to Cambrai, was discovered and dealt with before it could do any further damage. The fires were successfully checked by a large detachment of Canadian Engineers who entered the city with the patrols. A considerable number of road mines, 'booby traps,' etc., were also located and removed.

"An air reconnaissance at dawn indicated that the enemy had withdrawn from the area between the Scheldt Canal and the Canal de la Sensee, and that all bridges over the latter had been destroyed. Brutinel's Brigade, passing through the Infantry of the 2nd. Canadian Division, seized the high ground at Croix St. Hubert and pushed Cavalry patrols into Thun l'Eveque.

"The 2nd. Canadian Division, east of the Canal, progressed towards the north and occupied Thun l'Eveque, Thun St. Martin, Blecourt, Cuvillers, and Bantigny, and the 11th. Division occupied Abancourt and reached the outskirts of Paillencourt.

"The 3rd. Canadian Division was withdrawn at 7.10 p.m. when the 24th. Division (XVII Corps) passed through and joined up with the 2nd. Canadian Division, and Cambrai and our positions to the east were taken over or occupied by the XVII Corps.

"The 3rd. Canadian Division was moved on the following day to bivouacs in the Inchy-Queant area to rest and refit after 12 days of battle."

CHAPTER XIII

CONCLUSION OF THE BATTLE OF CAMBRAI

ALTHOUGH Cambrai had fallen, the battle itself is not officially regarded by the Canadian Corps as concluding until Oct. 12, when we were five miles east of the city and the relief of the 2nd. Canadian Division—our last Division in the line—was effected. It will be well to describe these concluding days before turning to the new field of operations opened up for the Corps north of the Sensee by the 1st. Canadian Division.

On Oct. 10 the attack was continued with the 2nd. Canadian Division on the right and the 11th. British Division on the left. The front of the 2nd. Division was changed to north of the Cambrai-Salzoir road, and at midnight, Oct. 9-10, the 4th. Brigade advanced through the 5th. Brigade, with their right flank on this road. The 19th. Battalion, Central Ontario, on the right jumped off at 7 a.m. from the railway cutting in front of Escaudoeuvres, and captured the village of Naves at 7.45 a.m. At 8 a.m. the 18th. Battalion, Western Ontario, jumped off on the left and attacked towards Iwuy. The 4th. Brigade was in touch on the right with the left Brigade of the Third Army just north of Rieux.

At two o'clock in the afternoon the 19th. Battalion advanced another 1,000 yards and got two companies across the Erclin river. At 7 p.m. they advanced another 1,500 yards, and took possession of the high ground, which was to be the assembly point for the attack on the following day. That night a relief of the troops by the 49th. British Division was ordered, and the 4th. Brigade was to side-slip and attack on a narrow front along the roadway east of Iwuy. The 20th. Battalion, Central Ontario, and 21st. Battalion, Eastern Ontario, were ordered to make the attack at 8 a.m. of Oct. 11,

with the 18th. Battalion in support. As it was impossible to relieve the 19th. Battalion properly, the troops of the 49th. Division were to pass through them and they were then to go into reserve.

Meantime, on Oct. 10, the 6th. Brigade had attacked on the left of the 4th. Brigade, the 28th. Battalion, of Regina, on the right capturing the village of Thun St. Martin, in the face of very heavy opposition, especially in the northern end of the village, just south of Iwuy, where the enemy had an immense munition dump; while on the Brigade left the 29th. Battalion, of Vancouver, stormed Thun l'Eveque.

Enemy defense had now hardened, and it was apparent that the strongly held position of Iwuy could be taken only by a set battle. A narrow neck of water, an affluent of the Scheldt, lies on the front of Iwuy, and surrounding it was a network of railway yards and sidings. Advantage of these obstacles had been taken to establish numerous machine-gun posts.

The attack was made at 8 a.m. by the 49th. Division on the right and the 2nd. Canadian Division on the left, the latter with the 4th. Brigade on its right and the 6th. Brigade on its left. To deal with Iwuy first. A frontal attack was made by the 28th. Battalion, while the 29th. Battalion pushed forward on the left of the village. Very hard fighting ensued but by noon the village was in our hands. "It was the hardest piece of fighting the 28th. ever did," said one of its officers. "The place was full of machine-guns, and it took us three or four hours to clean it up. It was all hand-to-hand fighting, the Boche being stout fellows. The battalion was broken up into small parties, fighting their way from house to house. One section under Lieut. White, of Saskatoon, captured the crews of five machine-guns itself." Altogether about 500 prisoners were captured with over 50 machine-guns in this very brilliant little affair.

At noon the remaining battalions of the 6th. Brigade, the 27th., of Winnipeg, and the 31st., Southern Alberta, pushed through the 28th. and 29th. Battalion, on the right and left

respectively, establishing a line 1,200 yards beyond Iwuy.

While this was going on, the 49th. British Division on the right had fought its way forward to the high ground east of the village. Our 4th. Brigade, advancing between this Division and Iwuy, had a very trying time, for until the village was reduced both the attacking Battalions, the 20th. and 21st., were exposed to heavy enfilade fire from Iwuy. Their casualties were heavy, totalling 700, but nevertheless they pushed their line forward along sunken roads east of the village and finally made good the top of Iwuy Spur.

This fighting was the scene of a brilliant exploit by Lieut. Lloyd Wallace Algie, 20th. Battalion, of Toronto, who showed conspicuous bravery and self-sacrifice when his troops came under heavy enfilade fire from Iwuy. Rushing forward with nine volunteers, he shot the crew of an enemy machine-gun, turning it on the enemy and thus enabling his party to reach the outskirts of the village. He then rushed another machine-gun, killed the crew and captured an officer and 10 men, and thereby cleared the end of the village. Lieut. Algie, having thus established his party, went back for reinforcements, but was killed when leading them forward.

In the course of the day the enemy made a strong counter-attack against the front of both the 49th. Division and our 4th. Brigade, supported by a number of tanks. The line fell back some distance but was later re-established. Against the 4th. Brigade the enemy sent five tanks, four being captured British tanks. These were beaten off by our artillery and machine-gun fire, but the fifth, an uncouth German monster, was disabled, and remained stranded on the ridge, an object of curiosity to our men, its crude pattern exciting a good deal of chaffing. All these tanks fired case shot. Lieut. Crombie, when the advance of the enemy tanks had momentarily thrown our line into confusion, used an anti-tank rifle with good effect, until he was mortally wounded.

When the 4th. Brigade fell back before this attack, the 27th. Brigade was left for the time in front of Iwuy with its

right flank in the air, but Lt.-Col. H. J. Riley, who had established his headquarters in Iwuy itself, speedily built up a protective flank with his reserve companies.

During the afternoon and night Iwuy and our entire line was heavily and steadily shelled by the enemy, so that it was exceedingly difficult to relieve or support units in advance of the village, but, though suffering heavy loss, the 27th. held the ground they had won until relieved in due course. Our troops of both the 4th. and 6th. Brigades were worn out by long marching and hard fighting, and had lost heavily, especially in officers and experienced N. C. O.'s. The news that the 2nd. Canadian Division was to be relieved on the following day by the 51st. British Division was therefore welcome.

On the morning of Oct. 12, on our left, the 5th. Brigade sent the 24th. Battalion, Victoria Rifles of Montreal, through the 6th Brigade, and this Battalion, in conjunction with troops of the 51st. Division, attacked in a northerly direction, capturing Hordain and pushed on to the outskirts of Bouchain, where the flooded area of inundations and marshes put a stop to our farther advance in this direction. Patrols of the 26th. Battalion, New Brunswick, and 25th. Battalion, Nova Scotia, actually pushed across the inundated area west of Bouchain, but nothing more could be done in this direction until further progress had been made south of Douai in the operation that had now opened along the Scarpe River.

That night the 2nd. Canadian Division was relieved and transferred to the new Corps area. This change of front is described by Sir Arthur Currie as follows: "The attack was continued at 6 a.m., Oct. 10, by the 2nd. Canadian and 11th. (British) Divisions, and good progress was made. The 2nd. Canadian Division captured Naves, and by nightfall reached a point one and a half miles northeast on the Cambrai-Salzoir road. From there our line ran westwards to the Scheldt Canal, exclusive of Iwuy, where we were held up by machine-gun fire.

"In this attack Brutinel's Brigade operated along the

Cambrai-Salzoir road, but finding the bridge over the Erclin River destroyed could not get their cars further forward.

"This bridge, although on the outpost line under heavy fire, was immediately replaced by the Engineers, a covering party being supplied by Brutinel's Brigade. Machine-gun crews from the cars went forward on foot, however, and materially assisted the Infantry advancing at this point, and the Corps Cavalry, by a brilliant charge, helped in the capture of the ground east of the Rieux-Iwuy road.

"On the left, the 11th. Division cleared the enemy from the area between the Scheldt Canal and the Sensee Canal, captured Paillencourt and Estrun, and reached the outskirts of Hem-Lenglet, which they occupied during the night.

"The 49th. and 51st. Divisions were released from Army Reserve and transferred to the Canadian Corps on Oct. 10. During the night of Oct. 10-11 the former relieved that part of the 2nd. Canadian Division east of Iwuy, and the 51st. (Highland) Division moved to the Escaudoeuvres area.

"At 8 a.m., Oct. 11, the Canadian Corps resumed the attack with the 49th. Division on the right and the 2nd. Canadian Division on the left. The enemy laid down a heavy Artillery barrage and both Divisions encountered stiff opposition. After fierce fighting, however, our attack made good progress, the 49th. Division gaining the high ground east of Iwuy, and the 2nd. Canadian Division capturing Iwuy and the high ground to the north.

"About 10.30 a.m. the enemy delivered a heavy counter-attack under an Artillery barrage and supported by seven Tanks, from the direction of Avesnes-le-Sec, against the 49th. and 2nd. Canadian Divisions. Our line was forced back slightly at first, but six of the Tanks were knocked out by our Artillery, the assaulting Infantry dispersed by our machine-gun and rifle fire, and the attack repulsed.

"Meanwhile, on Oct. 7-8, the 1st. Canadian Division had relieved the 4th. (British) Division (XXII Corps) on the frontage between Palluel and the Scarpe River, and passed under the command of the G. O. C., XXII Corps.

"At 5 p.m., Oct. 11, I handed over command of the Corps front (less the 11th. Divisional sector) to the G. O. C., XXII Corps, and the 2nd. Canadian and the 49th. and 51st. Divisions were transferred to the XXII Corps.

"At the same hour I assumed command of the former XXII Corps front, and the 56th. and the 1st. Canadian Divisions were transferred in the line to the Canadian Corps.

"During the night of Oct. 11-12 the 2nd. Canadian Division was relieved in the line east of the Iwuy-Denain railway by the 51st. (Highland) Division, and on completion of the relief I assumed command of the remainder of the 2nd. Canadian Divisional front, extending from the Iwuy-Denain railway (exclusive) to the Scheldt Canal.

"The battle of Arras-Cambrai, so fruitful in results, was now closed. Since Aug. 26 the Canadian Corps had advanced 23 miles, fighting for every foot of ground and overcoming the most bitter resistance.

"In that period the Canadian Corps engaged and defeated decisively 31 German Divisions, reinforced by numerous Marksmen Machine-Gun Companies. These Divisions were met in strongly fortified positions and under conditions most favorable to the defense.

"In this battle 18,585 prisoners were captured by us, together with 371 guns, 1,923 Machine-Guns and many Trench Mortars.

"Over 116 square miles of French soil, containing 54 towns and villages, and including the city of Cambrai, were liberated.

"The severity of the fighting and the heroism of our troops may be gathered from the casualties suffered between Aug. 22 and Oct. 11, and which are as follows:—

	Officers	Other Ranks
Killed	296	4,071
Missing	18	1,912
Wounded	1,230	23,279
Total	1,544	29,262

"Considering the great number of German Divisions engaged and the tremendous artillery and machine-gun fire power at their disposal, the comparative lightness of our casualties testified to the excellence of the precautions taken by Divisional, Brigade, and Regimental Officers to minimize the loss of life, having ever in mind the performance of their duty and the accomplishment of their heavy task."

Such was the battle of Cambrai. There remains only to quote the telegram sent to the Corps Commander on Oct. 1 by General Sir Henry E. Horne, commanding the First Army: —"I wish to express to you and the troops under your command my high appreciation of the determined fighting of the Canadian troops during the last five days. During this time Canadian troops, assisted by the 11th. Division and portions of the 56th. Division, successfully carried through the difficult manœuvre of forcing the crossing of the Canal du Nord in face of a determined enemy, and have captured Bourlon Wood and the high ground north and northwest of Cambrai. The importance which the enemy attached to these positions is shown by the number of Divisions which he has employed and by the violence of his counter-attacks during the last two days. Troops of no less than 12 hostile Divisions have been engaged during this period in the attempt to stem the successful advance of the Corps."

VALENCIENNES TO MONS

VALENCIENNES TO MONS

CHAPTER I

BATTLE PIECES

ON Sept. 28 Canadian Corps Headquarters moved from Neuville Vitasse into what had been an enemy headquarters situated in the heart of the Drocourt-Queant line half a mile east of Queant. The new camp is on rising ground and remains fairly dry even in wet weather, a pleasant change from our previous quarters. The enemy had here constructed elaborate dug-outs, 30 feet below the surface, with commodious canvas-lined rooms. But for the most part the staff works and sleeps in tents grouped in and about a little wood, the whole camouflaged against air observation.

The enemy persistently shells our railhead at Queant with a long-distance gun, whose shell at stated intervals goes whining over the camp. Trainloads of prisoners standing over night in the yards waiting to be moved to the base protest at our inhumanity. Little damage is done, though one shell lands in the lines of the Corps Garage. Several Canadian Ambulances are located at Queant but escape injury.

There joins the Canadian Corps about this time a young staff officer lent by the British Army who at once makes himself very popular. This is H. R. H. the Prince of Wales. Some of us had apprehensions of an atmosphere of "swank" and embarrassment, but these are speedily set at rest. He lives like any other staff officer in an Armstrong hut, and soon he is a familiar figure, chatting freely with both officers and men, and it is not long before "G.S.O. No. 2" is regarded as a distinct acquisition to Corps. He brings with him a charm and vivacity of manner—one thought of his Grand-

father, King Edward—that sets us all at our ease, an unstudied courtesy and friendly interest that breaks down the most crusted reserve, with a keenness for his work that at times must be a source of anxiety to those responsible for his well being, for he is never so happy as when "rotting round the front line," and has a way of slipping off by himself and paying unexpected visits to battalion and company headquarters. It is after one of these, when his host was clearly overcome by the honor unexpectedly thrust upon him, that he remarks: "He couldn't have been afraid of *me*; it must have been of the *name*."

So through several weeks he weaves his unconscious charm, and when he comes to leave us, it is with reluctance on his part and regret on ours; for not even the sternest democrat among us, whether officer or man in the ranks, can long resist a winning personality whose frankness disarms while his natural unassuming bearing wins confidence and even affection. It is a valuable experience on both sides. Citizens of a democratic country like Canada are accustomed to the aloof detachment and cultivated superiority of their great ones—in a word, to the snobbishness of wealth and power—and it is a delightful contrast to find in the heir to the throne a fine simplicity and the easy assumption of equality as among soldiers and friends.

This impression is so genuine, so spontaneous, that one hears his praises on every hand. "Gentlemen, the Prince of Wales will dine with us tomorrow night, and I want you all to be in your places." The injunction of the mess president was not needed and that evening will always be remembered by members of friendly "C" Mess as a most delightful experience—most of us might be described by the ungenerous as "old fogies," but that night we refurbished our youth and gave the Prince a good old-fashioned Canadian welcome.

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It is at Queant that news comes to the Canadian Corps of the armistice proposals. "Enemy accepts unconditionally

Wilson's terms, agrees to evacuate and asks for an immediate armistice."

"I don't think we'll listen to that for a while; everything is going fine and the spirit of our men is splendid," comments an officer of the 5th C.M.R., first to enter Cambrai, where the news reached him. "We must have an unconditional surrender, or in two months time he will be ready to start at us again." And one of his men adds: "We lads have been at it a long time but we want to see it through even if we stay six months or a year."

It is interesting to collect these views while the news is yet hot. "He knows he's beaten; we'll have our own peace this winter," says a private from the Ottawa Valley. A Tommy from the West Riding: "When Gerry comes knocking at the door with his pride in his pocket, he must be in a pretty bad way." A cook of our 87th. Battalion: "We've got him going and must keep pushing him along. If he had us where we had him he wouldn't listen to soft soap peace offers. It's the Rhine for us. When we get there next year he'll knuckle down." Another man of the same battalion (Grenadier Guards of Montreal): "They'll know how to deal with him. Bullets are the only peace argument the Boche can understand."

A Sergeant who was reputed to have charged a machine-gun nest in Blecourt with his bare fists: "The Hun is bankrupt. We must make him liquidate to the last cent of his assets. Our widows and orphans demand it. That can be done only by the sword."

The Captain of an imperial heavy battery, working his guns from the slope of Bourlon Wood, is of the same opinion. "I don't like it," he says. "The enemy is short of men and material. He is crippled for lack of field-guns and his ammunition seems running low. He'll drag on peace negotiations for three months and then go at us again."

Indeed, this news excites more apprehension than hope.

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For the Canadian soldier the cherished approach to Bourlon Wood must ever be from Inchy-en-Artois over the Canal du Nord and then up winding slopes past Quarry Wood, crossing the Marquion line, and so through Bourlon town. This village, still beautiful, clings beneath the brow of the wood. The walls of the great chateau remain, and something of the handsome church tower. Its condition, better than its neighbors, offers a practical foundation for rebuilding. Seen against the dark mass of up-climbing wood, even the white flake of ruin adds a decorative touch to the charming picture of red roofs and gray stone. The town is very old. For centuries it has looked out over the vale to the western heights crowned by the Bois de Bouche.

On the very crest of the wood, where the road runs south to Anneux, lies a tank of the C 2 class, the "Ceylon," No. 2724, flotsam of the first battle of Cambrai. One of her endless chains broken by a direct hit, she must have run off the roadbed, for she lies tilted at an extravagant angle over an enemy dug-out. Another shell struck the roof. The Boche have stripped her engines and all internal fittings. Nature has taken her to herself and in her mossy decrepitude she is part and parcel of the soil. For the revolving treads carry on their upper surfaces deposits of earth; on these little gardens have sprung up, the seed borne by birds and the wind. They resemble miniature kindergarten classes, for on this roof of steel now flourish grass and clover, bindweed and buttercup, daisies and Ragged Robin. Even through her broken tractor a little beech tree struggles. Good tank "Ceylon." You did not achieve that eminence and there render your life until your task was done, for even as you floundered and stopped, there came the sharp yell of the infantry as they fell upon the Boche gunners with bayonet and bomb.

Within a stone's throw to the left, where the raised road gives protection, lies an enemy 5.9-inch battery position. Shells already fused stand in place, but the guns are on their

way to the Canadian Corps' captured-gun park. A light railway runs up to the battery from Fontaine-Notre-Dame. Most of the dug-outs are unfinished and blind—the Boche was packing-in for the winter even as we fell upon him.

On the west end of the wood is a wonderful "O-Pip," built up into the trees, commanding a wide sweep of country in front of the Marquion line and the Canal du Nord. Near-by are two 8-inch guns, captured by Byng the previous November but not removed and still lying there, rusted and impressive.

The top of the wood, intact though it seems from a distance, is blasted. Only splintered trunks remain and these too must die. "The trees in this wood have been nurtured with blood," remarked a captured German officer. But on the southern and eastern slopes the ancient growth of oak and beech is unscathed, clothing the steep hillside. Blackberries are thick in the underbrush. A rabbit pops in and out. "What a show-place for the British tourist," says our companion. "A franc a head to see the famous wood—and the graves. Let them here amid their sandwiches and orange peel pour out a libation to the heroes of England and of Canada who died upon these slopes."

Standing on the crest of Bourlon Wood one surveys the battlefield not alone of today but of November, 1917. From dawn and until dark, in and around Bourlon Wood, four British divisions here withstood overwhelming masses of the enemy, and so saved the army from disaster. For them, perhaps, weary and bleeding, it was sufficient that they had done their duty as became British soldiers. Modest, steadfast and cheerful in adversity, his ingenuity constantly at work to belittle his own part in the show, the British soldier, whether of the old army or the new, is instinct in eminent degree with those qualities of mind and spirit that alone enabled him to bear undaunted the brunt of battle, the anguish of the long years of trench warfare, and so, his spirit unshaken, win through to final victory.

Such thoughts arise as one looks over the famous field and comes to a German military cemetery where lie honorably buried many of these gallant British soldiers who fell in November, 1917. Canada's share in this now common heritage of Bourlon Wood has been recorded in the preceding pages. In no battle where her armies were engaged was there greater need for, nor more successful application of, those special qualities of personal initiative and resource such as become second nature to men inured to the free life of the farm, the mining-camp or the shanty; in a land where even the city dweller from his boyhood up is accustomed once a year to take down his rifle from its rack and disappear for a treasured interval into the silent fastnesses of the red deer or moose.

For these the long winter evenings glow with reminiscences of the chase, of toil and hardy adventure; they exhibit proudly their trophies. They have now been engaged on more bitter sport, and in the years to come those of them who came through will carry a vivid picture of the dark outline of Bourlon Wood, and will cherish the memory of their comrades who lie close and ordered in the Canadian cemetery behind Bourlon town at foot of the wooded slope.

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The sad news comes to the Corps at Queant one day that Major-General L. J. Lipsett, who had so brilliantly commanded the 3rd. Canadian Division until after the close of the battle of Arras the preceding month, had been killed by a sniper's bullet on Oct. 14, while reconnoitering in the front line of his new command, the 4th British Division.

At the outbreak of the war General Lipsett, who was an officer of the British Army and had been lent to the Canadian Militia, was stationed at Winnipeg, and proceeded immediately to recruit the 8th. Battalion from the 90th. Winnipeg Rifles—"Little Black Devils" of Riel Rebellion fame —taking his unit overseas with the 1st. Canadian Division. It was this battalion that in April, 1915, held the line in the

Second Battle of Ypres in face of the enemy's first gas attack.

General Lipsett was successively promoted to command of the Brigade and the 3rd. Canadian Division, where his fine leadership, a courage that amounted to recklessness, his consideration for his officers and care for his men, soon endeared him to all ranks. The war, however, was clearly drawing to a close, and there could be no future for a professional soldier of his rank with the reduced Canadian Militia, and so he accepted the offer of the command of the 4th. British Division, regretfully parting from his old comrades, but with ahead of him the fairly certain and speedy prospect of a Corps Command in the British Army.

And now he is dead. The Canadian Corps buries him at Queant, where the civil cemetery had long overflowed its bounds to give shelter to friend and foe alike. It is a great and impressive gathering, in the drizzling rain of an autumn afternoon. A hollow square of men from every branch of the Canadian Corps, and particularly from his beloved 3rd. Division, encloses the open grave, lying there in the heart of No Man's Land. All round about are sombre hills, their bare outlines pitted by shell-holes and serrated by the white line of trenches, while across them stretch dark and forbidding belts of wire.

Presently are heard the poignant strains of a funeral march and the cortege approaches. His old battalion, the 8th., furnishes the firing party, the men marching with dragging feet and arms reversed. Behind walk with bowed head the Corps Commander, the Prince of Wales, officers of the 4th. British Division and many of his tried comrades of the Canadian Corps. There is something strikingly impressive, even barbaric, about the rites of a military funeral, and this is heightened by the time, the place and the circumstance. But at length all is over; the funeral oration pronounced, the last volley fired, the Last Post sounded; a great soldier and good citizen has been laid to his rest.

It was the last we were to see of No Man's Land. Next day Corps Headquarters move to Lewarde.

CHAPTER II

OPERATIONS: OCT. 6-16

SIR ARTHUR CURRIE describes the general situation at this period as follows:—"While the Canadian Corps was tenaciously fighting to break through the hinge of the Hindenburg System of defense, the Third and Fourth British Armies were pushing forward through the devastated areas in the Somme, meeting everywhere strong and determined rearguards. The outer defenses of the Hindenburg line were captured by them on Sept. 18 and 19, and a good position secured for the assault on the main defenses.

"The storming of the Canal du Nord line, which brought the Canadian Corps definitely behind the areas organized for defense, was immediately followed by the capture of the main Hindenburg line on the fronts of the Third and Fourth Armies, and on Oct. 8 and 10 the Scheldt Canal was crossed north of Cambrai. Cambrai was seized and the German rearguards pushed back in open country to the Selle river.

"The Germans were falling back everywhere; they had now evacuated completely the Lys salient and a portion of the ground east and south of Lens, but they were still holding a line west of Lille-Douai and along the Canal de la Sensee.

"The Canadian Corps, although tired and depleted in numbers, began to push forward as soon as it had taken over the new front on the Canal de la Sensee south of Douai. On Oct. 14 the Second Army, in conjunction with Belgian Armies and French Detachments, attacked the northern part of the salient and precipitated the German retreat."

While Cambrai was falling and our 2nd. Division was pushing out east of the city, the 1st. Canadian Division had taken over its new ground north of the Scarpe and was making headway on a front that had remained practically static since

the Canadian Corps at the end of August had opened the battle of Arras. North of the Scarpe and of the Sensee the line of enemy defenses was still intact, that is to say the Hindenburg line proper, the Drocourt-Queant line, and subsidiary trench systems. It was the possession by the enemy of this terrain that so greatly added to the difficulties encountered by the Canadian Corps throughout their progress from Arras to Cambrai.

The time had now come to break through and bring the northern flank into line with our advance east of Cambrai, an area now transferred to the XXII Corps, the Canadian Corps, led by the 1st. Canadian Division, moving into the area that Corps had hitherto held. It followed therefore that while hitherto the XXII Corps had occupied the centre of the First Army front and the Canadian Corps its right, the positions were reversed, the Canadian Corps becoming the centre and the XXII Corps, instead of being on our left, were henceforth to be our neighbors on the right, a position hitherto occupied by the XVII Corps of the Third Army. Our neighbors on our left were now the VIII Corps, this being the left of the First Army. Its remaining Corps, the I Corps, had been transferred with its sector on Sept. 20 to the Fifth Army, operating north of Lens.

On the night of Oct. 6-7 the 1st. Canadian Division took up their new line south of the marshes of the Sensee and Scarpe from Paillue, where the Canal du Nord crosses the Sensee, west to Sailly-en-Ostrevent and thence northwest to Biache-St. Vaast, but keeping south of the Little Trinquis brook. The Division therefore faced north, the 2nd. Brigade being on the right and the 3rd. Brigade on the left, with the 1st. Brigade in support. They signalled their presence by a night raid across this watery waste into enemy territory, returning with an officer and 23 other prisoners, the first prisoners, by the way, captured in this sector during October.

At 5 a.m. on Oct. 8 a "Chinese attack" was put on—all sound and fury with no intention of attacking in force, the object being to discover the enemy's strength. However a

post was pushed over and established across the river for purposes of observation.

Oct. 9 the line remained quiet but early next morning our patrols pushed over and captured Sailly, and then advanced some distance along the Queant-Drocourt line, capturing an officer and 47 other ranks. The object of this demonstration was if possible to pin the Boche down to that front. He counter-attacked in great strength, and our object being gained, we recrossed the river, leaving Sailly again in his hands.

These preliminaries had disclosed his dispositions, and at three o'clock next morning, Oct. 11, a concerted night attack was made, in conjunction with the VIII Corps on our left, under cover of a great concentration of artillery. On our right, the 2nd. Brigade crossed the Sensee at Tortequenne, from which the enemy had been blasted by our artillery, and seized the dominant feature, Mont Bedu, a hill to the northwest, the attacking troops being the 8th. Battalion, of Winnipeg, on the right, the 5th. Battalion, Saskatchewan, in the centre, and 7th. Battalion, British Columbia, on the left, with the 10th. Battalion, of Alberta, in support. Canadian Engineers speedily built bridges across, all the country being flooded, with only two practical causeways.

On our left the 3rd. Brigade attacked with the 16th. Battalion, Canadian Scottish of Western Canada, on the right, and the 15th. Battalion, 48th. Highlanders of Toronto, on the left, both crossing the Triquis and then advancing, the former in the direction of Noyelle-sous-Bellonne and the latter in the direction of Vitry-en-Artois, on the Scarpe, where contact was established with the VIII Corps, which had advanced from its line easterly whereas our advance was due north, the design being to cut the enemy out of the triangle formed by the Triquis and the Scarpe.

The advance was continued throughout the day and by nightfall the 2nd. Brigade had captured Hamel, Estrees and Bellonne, from two to three thousand yards east, northeast and north respectively, while the 3rd. Brigade had pushed up to a

line 1,000 yards south of Brebieres, only 5,000 yards south-west of Douai. Thus, on the same day that the 2nd. Canadian Division was capturing Iwuy—about 15 miles to the south-east—the 1st. Canadian Division, holding 14,000 yards of front and attacking on a 12,000 yard frontage, employing only two Brigades, carried its line across a watery waste and penetrated in a northerly direction five to six thousand yards, thus threatening to cut off the enemy's retreat through Douai.

On our left the 8th. British Division had also a very successful day. Since Oct. 7 it had fought its way from just east of Oppy through the Fresnes-Rouvroy line and now made a frontal attack on the Drocourt-Queant line north of the Scarpe, simultaneously with the turning movement of the 1st. Canadian Division from the south. "At 5.10 a.m. the Middlesex and Devons attacked," says the First Army narrative, "and at 7 a.m. the Drocourt-Queant line opposite was taken except for the town of Vitry on the Scarpe. The way in which this formidable line was taken was ingenious—and psychological. A heavy barrage was put down, not on the whole line attacked, which would have pinned the enemy to fighting or his dug-outs, but only on the extreme southern part of the line. Then slowly, very slowly—100 yards in eight minutes—but surely and inevitably it crept northwards, extending along the German trenches. The men in those trenches, still free from death and destruction raining down further south, saw it creeping, creeping, creeping nearer and more near. The tension was increased by the slowness of the barrage extension. It was too much; and the Boche decided not to wait for what was coming but to get out while the opportunity offered."

A moving description, but the psychology of the enemy seems to have changed somewhat since those bitter days six weeks before when the Canadian Corps drove him out of the Drocourt-Queant line on the south side of the Scarpe.

"Meantime a platoon of the Middlesex had crossed the Scarpe at Vitry," this narrative continues, "and taken Mont

Metier, a commanding position about 1,000 yards south of the river. This was trespassing, for south of the river was the Canadian sector. So to them it was handed over, and its possession much assisted their advance.

"Our attack followed up the retiring enemy, and by nightfall the line ran from well beyond Beaumont, round Cuinchy (a very pronounced central salient), and back to the Scarpe about 600 yards east of Vitry. The advance ranged from 4,000 yards on the flanks to 8,000 in the centre (the Berkshires were here) and gave us much material and stores, which the enemy had no time to remove or destroy. From this moment until the 8th. Division in its victorious advance crossed the Scarpe and entered Douai, the enemy fought for every bit of ground, using many concealed artillery and machine-gun positions, while we had a great deal of wire to pass. Booby-traps of varied and ingenious kinds were everywhere—odd bits of timber apparently thrown carelessly down, helmets, strands of wire, all among the harmless debris and material left by the retreating enemy."

On Oct. 12 the attack was continued, our 1st. Brigade coming into the line, and a wide pivoting movement being carried out, based on Arleux, which had been captured by the 56th. British Division, now under the Canadian Corps command. All three Brigades of the 1st. Canadian Division advanced in line, their left flank sweeping the south bank of the Scarpe, until by nightfall they had cleared the enemy out of the triangle formed by the Scarpe, the Canal du Nord and the Sensee, and held a line on the west bank of the Canal du Nord between Arleux and Corbenham. This marked in 30 hours an advance on the pivoting wing of 9,000 yards, many prisoners and a considerable number of machine-guns being captured.

The next few days were spent in preparing for a concerted attack by the Canadian Corps, whose Divisions were now reunited. On the right, the 2nd. Canadian Division, which had relieved the 11th. British Division and held a line from

Bouchain west to Aubencheul-au-Bac, was to cross the flooded area of the Sensee, attacking in a northerly direction; in the centre, the 4th. Canadian Division, which was coming up in relief of the 56th. British Division, was to make a similar attack from Aubencheul-au-Bac west to Arleux; and on the left, the 1st. Canadian Division was to storm the line of the Canal du Nord north of the Sensee and advance in an easterly direction. The 3rd. Canadian Division was under orders to relieve our 1st. Division, but in the event, so swift was our advance that the relief could not be made until some days after the date determined.

Sir Arthur Currie in his despatch thus describes the events of these days:—"The new Front of the Canadian Corps (at 5 p.m. Oct. 11) extended from Iwuy-Denain Railway, north of Iwuy, to the Scheldt Canal at Estrun, thence following the southern bank of the Canal de la Sensee to Palluel, thence crossing the Sensee River at Hamel to the Scarpe River east of Vitry. The front was held by the 2nd. Canadian Division from the right to the Scheldt Canal—the 11th. Division from Estrun (inclusive) to Aubencheul-au-Bac (exclusive)—the 56th. Division from Aubencheul-au-Bac (inclusive) to Palluel (inclusive), and the 1st. Canadian Division from Palluel (exclusive) to the western boundary.

"The Fronts of the 11th. and 56th. Divisions were then stationary, but on the Front of the 1st. Canadian Division crossings had been forced over the Sensee and Trinquis Rivers that morning, and the enemy was retiring, closely followed by battle patrols of the 1st. Canadian Division.

"The 1st. Canadian Division had relieved the 4th. British Division in the line along the south side of the valleys of the Sensee and Trinquis Rivers, from Palluel (exclusive) to the Scarpe, during the nights Oct. 5-6 and 6-7, coming under orders of the XXII Corps.

"The front had been a quiet one, the river valleys having been flooded by the enemy to an average width of from 300 to 400 yards, and the bridges destroyed.

"On the morning of Oct. 8 the Division carried out a 'Chinese attack' with a view to ascertaining the enemy's probable action if attacked. Under the cover of the barrage, patrols succeeded in enlarging the small bridgehead across the river at Sailly-en-Ostrevent, capturing 24 prisoners and two machine-guns.

"The enemy was expected to withdraw shortly, and this barrage was repeated daily at dawn with the object of harassing the enemy and testing his strength. At 3 a.m., Oct. 10, battle patrols were pushed out by the 3rd. Canadian Infantry Brigade (Brig.-General G. S. Tuxford) from the bridgehead at Sailly, and after capturing the village they entered the Drocourt-Queant line to the northeast. Thirty prisoners and six machine-guns were sent back from Sailly at daylight; a strong enemy counter-attack (estimated at two battalions) overran the force in the Drocourt-Queant line and recaptured Sailly, driving our line back to the line previously held.

"On Oct. 11, in conjunction with an attack on the left by the 8th. Division, our troops forced their way over the narrow crossings of the Sensee and Trinquis Rivers in the face of considerable machine-gun fire and pushed northwards and eastwards, meeting only resistance from isolated machine-gun nests. The performance of the first patrols in forcing their way across the narrow causeways, all stoutly defended by machine-guns, was a splendid achievement.

"By the night of Oct. 11 the 1st Canadian Division, on the left, had reached the line Hamel-Estrees-Noyelles (all inclusive), and at dawn, Oct. 12, pushed forward, clearing Arleux and reaching the west bank of the Canal from Palluel to the Scarpe.

"On Oct. 12 the line remained stationary between the Canal du Nord and the Scheldt Canal. East of the Scheldt Canal the 2nd. Canadian Division attacked at noon in conjunction with the XXII Corps on the right and captured Hordain. Attempts to push forward to Basseville were, however, stopped by machine-gun fire. The restricted area and

the inundated condition of the ground prevented further progress on this front until the troops on the right could get forward.

"It was apparent from many indications that the enemy was preparing to carry out a withdrawal on a large scale. Prisoners reported the evacuation of civilians and the removal or destruction of all stores, also that roads and railways had been prepared for demolition. These statements were confirmed by our observers, who reported numerous and frequent explosions and fires behind the enemy's lines.

"On the Canadian Corps' front, the Divisions in the line were confronted by the Canal de la Sensee, and this in its flooded condition was a serious obstacle, the few crossings possible being narrow and easily defended. Orders were issued, however, that a policy of aggressive patrolling should be adopted to detect at the earliest moment any retirement, and that all preparations should be made for an immediate and rapid pursuit.

"Our patrols were most daring during the next few days, but no weak spot was to be found along the enemy front, our attempts at crossing the Canal being stopped by heavy machine-gun and rifle fire.

"During the night of Oct. 12-13 the 2nd. Canadian Division extended its left to Aubencheul-au-Bac exclusive, relieving the 11th. Division in the line, with the 4th Canadian Infantry Brigade (Brig.-General G. E. McCuaig) on the right, and the 6th. Canadian Infantry Brigade (Brig.General A. Ross) on the left. At this stage the G.O.C. 56th. Division represented that his troops were too weak and tired to carry out the vigorous pursuit required in case of an enemy withdrawal. The 4th. Canadian Division was, therefore, ordered to relieve the 56th. Division by the morning of Oct. 16, and in the meantime to place one Brigade at the disposal of the G.O.C. 56th. Division to be used in following up the enemy. On Oct. 13 the 10th. Canadian Infantry Brigade, which had been resting in Arras, was accordingly moved up

to Marquion, and came into reserve under the 56th. Division.

"During the early morning of Oct. 13 the 56th. Division crossed the Canal and succeeded in establishing a bridgehead at Aubigny-au-Bac, capturing the village with 201 prisoners. At 10 p.m. the following night, however, an enemy counter-attack in strength caused our withdrawal from the village, but the bridgehead was retained.

"The relief of the 56th. Division by the 4th. Canadian Division was carried out on the nights of Oct. 14-15 and 15-16 without incident, and the former moved back to rest in the Arras-Haute Avesnes-Maroeuil area, coming into Army Reserve.

"Patrols of the 1st. Canadian Division succeeded in crossing the Canal near Ferin, on its left Brigade front, during the early morning of Oct. 14, but meeting strong resistance, the parties withdrew, taking with them some prisoners and machine-guns."

CHAPTER III

THE ADVANCE ON DENAIN

ON Oct. 17 the 1st. Canadian Division crossed the Canal du Nord, the 1st. Brigade, on the left, effecting their passage in the morning, followed by the 2nd. Brigade on their right. Troops of the 4th. Canadian Division, unable to make headway by a direct assault on the line of the Sensee, swung out to their left, crossing over the Canal du Nord, and then working east along the north bank of the Sensee, clearing out opposition as they went, chiefly from enemy machine-gun posts. Later in the day the 2nd. Canadian Division, in the neighborhood of Wasnes-au-Bac, with troops of the 6th. Brigade, succeeded in gaining a footing on the north bank. On the following morning, Oct. 18, the 4th. Brigade attacked, the 18th. Battalion, Western Ontario, and 19th. Battalion, of Toronto, crossing over on a footbridge between Paillencourt and Estrun and advancing as far as Wavrechain. Canadian Engineers followed up closely, constructing pontoon and steel bridges over both the canal and river. The enemy had blown every crossing and demolished causeways and railway bridges, their engineers showing remarkable efficiency in this work of destruction.

Fog blotted out the landscape, favoring the retreat. After the crossing had been effected, our troops advanced several miles, with patrols thrown out in front, in a vain endeavor to get in touch with enemy rearguards. For days to come the mist hung low over the countryside, and our airmen were powerless. In these days magnificent work was done by Corps Signals, who pushed their telegraph lines ahead abreast of the advance, thus keeping all units in touch, a remarkable feat, for in the text books it had never been contemplated that in open warfare of the nature now developing wire communi-

cations could thus be maintained. But the work was carried forward right up to Mons, and, after the armistice, through Belgium to the Rhine.

Once the north bank of the Sensee had been cleared, our advance went forward practically unchecked for several days. Canadian Railway Troops had been brought up to repair communications, but our progress quite outpaced their utmost efforts, and the troops pressed on, often with but meagre rations, yet stimulated by the prospect of liberating civilians in the next village ahead, and there again encouraged to fresh exertions.

It was claimed for the 1st. Brigade, Brig.-General W. A. Griesbach, that its troops were first to enter Douai. It had been evacuated of its civilian population, and might have been a city of the dead. for there was no sign of life, other than a few sentries. A block of buildings on the Rue de Paris, fronting the Grande Place, had been burned, but otherwise there was no sign of intentional demolition, such as had characterized the enemy evacuation of Cambrai. The magnificent old Hotel de Ville was intact, and now floating over it once again was the tricolor. But within was evidence of systematic sack, historic pictures having been taken from their frames, and even the great gilt candelabra removed from the ceilings, but left heaped on the floor, in the hurry of the retreat. Only the wonderful frescoes on the walls of the banquet hall remained.

Here again the town had been given over to sack by the soldiery. Shops had been looted and every private house entered and its contents of value removed, with the same wanton destruction of what was left that had marked Cambrai. In the cathedral, a great pile of altar furnishings and vestments on the floor showed that had time been given these too would have gone.

The same sack had been carried out in all the evacuated villages, but as the retreat gained momentum, with our men close upon its heels, this evacuation of civilians could no

longer be effected by the retreating enemy. For our troops in their concentric movement on Denain often entered villages at one end while the Boche were leaving at the other, and yet already the tricolor, so carefully hid these long years, had broken out from every window and the glad villagers, weeping for joy, crowded around, impeding our advance, though still was heard the rattle of machine-guns, and occasionally a shell would burst in the narrow street. From their slender store they pressed upon our soldiers coffee and bread, and garlanded the guns with flowers. "Vive les Canadiens," "Long Live Our Liberators," and "Glory to the Heroes," hung in great streamers across the village square.

On Oct. 21 Canadian Corps Headquarters moved to Lewarde, a village on the Douai-Denain road. Just beyond was Auberchicourt, a typical industrial village, whose rows of bright brick cottages recalled the Lens area, with its glass-works and the "fosses"—conical heaps of slag—rising up from the flatness of the plain, indicating the pit mouths. The Boche had wrecked these mines, flooding their levels and blowing up their shafts, damage that it must take years to repair. We had come to the borders of the most valuable industrial district of France, and everywhere was ruin.

A curious example of German psychology exists in the village of Lewarde on the walls of a barn converted by the Boche into a concert hall. The artist, of no mean talent, used these flat spaces to exhibit a series of three pictures that might well bear the motto: "As YE sow so shall WE reap."

In the first of these, a long horizontal panel, a finely drawn bull is seen drawing a heavy wooden plow. In the furrow guiding it strains a young Frenchwoman, flat-breasted and dulled by field labor, but with still a meagre beauty.

The next depicts an old Frenchman, knotted and bowed, sowing the field. A little boy toddles beside him. Behind is a village church and a windmill. With savage fidelity the artist makes mute despair the keynote of both these groups—of the woman straining at the plow and the old man wearily

casting the seed; for here cannot be that joy of labor that even as it plants sees in the long months to follow first the tender sprouting blade, then the wind upon the grain, the harvest field, and safe-garnered fruits of the earth in neatly-ordered stacks awaiting the thresher. Despair dragging at their feet, they toil to make fat the destroyer.

Relentlessly the third picture drives home this horrid truth. Swinging a scythe in the yellowing cornfields is the great central figure of a Prussian soldier, terrible, with the same unerring fidelity—a ferocious, crouching figure of long arms, knotted hands and widespread legs, repulsive as the gorilla. Power it has and strength and cunning; the wheat sheaves bow before it. With a fine compelling touch of irony the artist fills in his background with marching German soldiers—force directing the harvest.

He has taken away with him everything. Not a horse nor a cow, a pig nor a hen, is left in the country. In one village he has even taken the nanny-goat whose milk was keeping alive a sick child. He burned the straw he threshed. Where he could not remove grain he scattered it over the barnyard. As for the peasants' houses, they are stripped. The sack has been systematic. We captured at Lewarde a trainload of furniture taken from this village, still standing on the siding, all neatly packed and labelled, "By order of the Army Command."

Little groups of peasants, old men, women and children, push before them their hand-carts piled high with what household belongings they could take when evacuated. They come back to their villages to find but empty shells, the accumulations of patient generations of labor scattered to the four winds or lying soiled and broken on floors deliberately befouled—but they return free citizens of a free nation; over their threshold is the tricolor, and they are at home.

Ah! such scenes! Following hard on the enemy a field-battery comes to a stream where the bridge has been broken down. Seizing picks and shovels the ecstatic villagers break down barns and garden walls to make a crossing. This not

going fast enough they throw in mattresses, bedsteads and whatever moveables the Boche have left. "Bravo, bravo!" they cry as the first gun crosses and gallops up the road.

The villagers east of Douai, whom the Boche had no time to evacuate, are better off; though their livestock has gone, they have preserved their furniture. Their houses are exquisitely neat and clean, the tiled floor spotless and kitchen utensils shining. By contrast they make the work of the Boche elsewhere more beastly. Such a village is Vred, lying in a loop of the Scarpe, northeast of Montigny, where in the chateau our 1st. Brigade has its headquarters, and one of its bedroom doors bears the inscription in chalk: "Feldmarschall Hindenburg"—a very recent visitor, the villagers say.

An enemy battalion had been quartered in Vred for years, but its people have a proper pride, for not a village girl listened to the Boche and no bedraggled damsels followed the retreating army—more than can be said for every village. They were eager to see Canadian troops and so, although this village is outside the northern boundary of the Canadian Corps, one Sunday afternoon Lt.-Col. A. W. Sparling, of the 1st. Battalion, billeted near, marches in with his band playing. It becomes a fete day. The villagers, scant though their means, insist on providing refreshments for the entire battalion, with many cups of coffee—or the bitter substitute that goes by that name. Children bring great bouquets of flowers, asters and chrysanthemums.

From intimate talk with these villagers one is able to gather a picture of just what the enemy occupation has meant. Other villagers fared worse where the soldiery was brutal and licentious—in Vred it was a continual struggle for existence. They were robbed of their rations issued by the American Mission—and more lately by the Spanish. For after drawing them they were "requisitioned" by soldiers, who gave in return sauerkraut and black bread—"To your good health, Madame," said a Boche officer as he munched American biscuits. They had no fresh meat for years; but for their

garden produce they would have starved; cabbage soup was the mainstay. Able-bodied men were drafted away to work in trenches and the young women taken to the forests, receiving for their labor scanty pay in German paper currency, now worthless.

These privations are stamped upon every face. Malnutrition caused many deaths. One quarter of the village population, according to the Battalion M.O., are sick from this cause. Voluntarily our men have assigned 20 per cent. of their rations to the villagers. But they need careful dieting and nursing. Many of the children, wizened mites, can never be robust; they must carry the mark of the Boche to their grave.

To see all this, to have brought thus intimately home the perils and sufferings of both body and spirit of these long years, makes what our soldiers have accomplished all so immensely worth while. One of our men is carrying a little child; others cling about him. "We are fully repaid," he says, "for all we have gone through; our dead have not died in vain."

Our gaping wounds are bathed in grateful tears. Let no mother, nor wife nor sister in Canada feel—if ever they felt—that their boys gave their lives merely for an abstraction; even for so great and splendid an ideal as truth and honor and justice. They died that living people, good people, true people, might be freed from physical bonds and be restored to spiritual life. In every little home is a crucifix and the signs of humble devotion. A pious, earnest, sober, frugal people, these French peasants, narrow perhaps in vision but firm of soul. The knight errantry of Canada might have sought the world over and the ages through for a people in distress more worthy of a righteous war of liberation. Through long generations the memory of these days, the coming of the Canadians and the bursting asunder of fetters, will be cherished in steadfast French hearts.

Meanwhile we had been pushing on. On Oct. 18 the line had reached to west of Bouchain, west of Auberchicourt with

Marquette and Montigny inclusive. From Oct. 18-19 a considerable advance was made which resulted in the capture by the 4th. Canadian Division on Oct. 19 of the important town of Denain. On Oct. 18 the 11th. Brigade captured Auberchicourt, Aniche, and Abscon (102nd. Battalion), and on Oct. 19 Escaudin (54th. Battalion).

On its right the 2nd. Canadian Division captured Bouchain, Mastaing, Roeulx and Lourches, while on our left the 1st. Canadian Division captured Bruille, Somain, Fenam, Erre, Hornaing and Helesmes.

This period is summed up by the Corps Commander thus: "Test barrages were carried out on the Corps front each morning to ascertain the enemy's strength and attitude, and on Oct. 17 the enemy was found extremely quiet and did not retaliate to our Artillery fire on the front of the 1st. Canadian Division. Patrols were therefore sent out on that front and succeeded in crossing the Canal du Nord in several places, meeting only slight opposition. Stronger patrols followed and made good progress.

"On the front of the 4th. Canadian Division, however, all attempts to cross the Canal were still met by machine-gun fire. After the 1st. Canadian Division had secured crossings, a Battalion of the 4th. Canadian Division was sent up to take advantage of these crossings and, working down the east side of the Canal, cleared the enemy on the 4th. Canadian Division front, and enabled the advance to commence there.

"Further to the right, at Hem Lenglet, the 2nd. Canadian Division succeeded in crossing the Canal later in the day, and patrols were pushed on in the direction of Wasnes-au-Bac.

"Only enemy rearguards were encountered during the day, and the opposition was nowhere heavy, although more organized and stubborn on the right opposite the 2nd. Canadian Division.

"By 6 a.m., Oct. 18, practically all the Infantry of the 1st. and 4th. Canadian Divisions and several Battalions of the 2nd. Canadian Division were across the Canal, and the fol-

lowing towns had been liberated:—Ferin, Courchelettes, Goeulzin, Le Racquet, Villers-au-Tertre, Cantin, Roucourt, Brunemont, Aubigny-au-Bac, Fechain, Fressain, Bugnicourt, and Hem Lenglet.

"During that day two armored cars, one squadron of the Canadian Light Horse and one Company of Canadian Corps Cyclists from Brutinel's Brigade, were attached to each of the 1st. and 4th. Canadian Divisions to assist in the pursuit of the enemy. These troops remained under the leading Divisions throughout subsequent operations and rendered valuable service to the Divisions to which they were attached, although the enemy's very complete road destruction prevented the armored cars from operating to their full extent.

"Throughout the advance now begun a great amount of work was thrown upon the Engineers, and their resources in men and material were taxed to the utmost. The enemy's demolition had been very well planned and thoroughly carried out, all bridges over the canals and streams being destroyed, every cross-road and road junction rendered impassable by the blowing of large mines, and the railways, light and standard, blown up at frequent intervals. The enemy also considerably impeded our progress by his clever manipulation of the water levels in the canals which he controlled.

"Foot-bridges were first thrown across the Canal, and these were quickly followed by heavier types of bridges to carry Battalion transport and Artillery, and in addition eight heavy traffic bridges, ranging in length from 90 to 160 feet, were at once put under way. On the Front of the 1st. Canadian Division on the left the enemy drained the Canal, and it was found impossible to complete and use the pontoon bridges first commenced.

"The Engineers in the forward area concentrated their efforts on road repair, craters being quickly filled in, for the most part with material gathered on the spot and found in enemy dumps. In addition, the whole areas were searched immediately after their occupation, many "booby traps" and

delayed action mines being discovered and rendered harmless, and all water supply sources being tested.

"It was clear from the wholesale destruction of roads and railways that the reconstruction of communications would be very slow and that it would be difficult to keep our troops supplied. Canadian Railway Troops were brought up, and as soon as the enemy had been cleared away from the Canal, work was commenced on the repairing of the standard gauge railway forward from Sauchy Lestree. The construction of a railway bridge over the Canal at Aubencheul-au-Bac was immediately commenced.

"The enemy retirement now extended considerably north of our front, and the VIII Corps on our left began to move forward. During Oct. 18 rapid and fairly easy progress was made, and the following towns and villages were liberated from the enemy:—Dechy, Sin-le-Noble, Guesnain, Montigny, Pecquencourt, Loffre, Lewarde, Erchin, Masny, Ecaillon, Marquette, Wasnes-au-Bac and the western portions of Auberchicourt and Monchecourt.

"During the day the advance had carried us into a large industrial area, and well-built towns became more frequent. It also liberated the first of a host of civilians, 2,000 being found in Pecquencourt and a few in Auberchicourt. These people had been left by the retiring enemy without food, and faced as we were by an ever lengthening line of communication, and with only one bridge yet available for anything but horse transport, the work of the supply services was greatly increased. This additional burden was, however, cheerfully accepted, and the liberated civilians, whose number exceeded 70,000 before Valenciennes was reached, as well as our rapidly advancing troops, were at no time without a regular supply of food."

Allusion has been made to the fog, which for days impeded our advance, the sun not being seen for the 10-day period, Oct. 14 to 23, and for two days it rained continuously, making the roads a quagmire. The Boche could not have selected a

better time for making his get-away. Progress was very tedious, because besides destroying all bridges and railway tracks, he had blown enormous craters at every cross-road. Difficulties of observation have been referred to, but the absence of information from our air scouts was to some degree supplied by the efficient work of our Intelligence Officers, aided by the Corps Cavalry, mounted infantry and cyclists. It was impossible, of course, to say with the same definiteness what forces the enemy had on our front, as had been done so wonderfully in all the fighting up to the close of the Battle of Cambrai, and the connection is appropriate for recording something of that phase of Corps operations.

Throughout the heavy fighting from Aug. 8 to Oct. 12, the Canadian Corps Commander and his staff were kept accurately and constantly informed of the enemy strength and dispositions, and to the uninitiated there was something almost of magic in the positive statements issued daily by the Intelligence Department of the Corps as to the enemy elements opposing us, what units had been "washed-out" by our attacks, what reserves had been brought up, whence they came and their battle history, all illustrated by maps showing battery positions, areas of troops in support and so on. Unremitting and unflagging, the great military detective force carries on its work silently and without any sort of public recognition in the daily official reports of operations, but through its exertions our troops have the vital advantage that instead of fumbling in the dark they can walk straight in the light of day.

In the early years of the war the enemy's Intelligence was superior to our own, but in its closing period the situation was reversed, and particularly as he fell back and thus lost touch with his agencies and the attacking force, his blunders became very patent. On the other hand we were admirably served, and in no quarter more so than by our own Intelligence officers. There were, of course, subterranean channels, and much information was collated from a careful study of the

air photographs, a work carried on with great thoroughness and gallantry by the R. A. F.

But the most certain source of information lay through identification of prisoners, and this was reduced to such a pitch of scientific skill that half an hour after a show opened our Intelligence officers at Canadian Corps Headquarters were able to enumerate the divisions opposed to us. Its agents were right up in the firing line, and identification of enemy units began there and then. More elaborate and intimate work was done in the various Divisional cages, and finally at the central clearing-house, the Corps' cage for prisoners of war. Here men speaking perfectly the German tongue and apparently prisoners themselves, moved freely about, gathering information, and prisoners showing a disposition to talk were interrogated at length.

This service, as indeed the whole conduct of operations, can only be carried on successfully with the close co-operation of Corps Signals. Fighting a battle is as much a concentrated business as a Christmas mail-order service. Every department must function or the whole will fall to pieces. Before a shot is fired, the work of the General Staff is completed. Many days and nights have been employed in preparation, and it is only when the battle starts that its members can lean back in their chairs and take a moment of ease. They have done their part; the execution of the plan is left to others.

During the progress of the battle a tremendous strain is thrown on Signals, which must keep all units in close touch with their headquarters; the brigades with their divisions; these latter with Corps Headquarters. Nor is this all. They must maintain uninterrupted the all-important liason between the infantry and artillery. A loss of communication at a critical moment of the advance must mean the useless sacrifice of many lives, for our counter-battery work is of vital value to the attacking troops. Not less important is the work of preparation. As Intelligence is the eyes, so Signals are the ears of the General Staff. A good illustration is furnished by the

record of operations established by the Canadian Corps Signal Service on Sunday, Sept. 1, when preparations were completing for the assault next morning on the famous Drocourt-Queant line. On that day 7,811 messages were handled, to say nothing of the Corps telephone service, 2,440 being by despatch riders and the balance by land wires or wireless.

This requires a large staff of telegraph operators, both on the land and wireless services, and these have been recruited from the pick of the profession in Canada, from the news agency staffs, commercial telegraph companies and broker offices. They "carry-on" under very difficult conditions, frequently exposed to shell fire and night-bombing raids. Especially in the wireless, they reach a high standard of proficiency and some of these latter become acquainted with the enemy wireless calls, a knowledge that occasionally proves of great value. Thus, when a Canadian wireless section was sent up to Flanders just before the opening of the Amiens show, this knowledge enabled them to completely mislead the enemy as to our intentions and confirmed his Intelligence in its belief that the Canadian Corps was to be thrown in on that front. This particular branch is known as the "I-Tok" Section—the Interception Branch of the Wireless Section—and it was said that our Intelligence had the enemy code six months ahead.

Hazardous indeed is the work of the cable linesmen who construct and repair wires under fire, suffering many casualties. A gallant story is told of two signallers of a Manitoba field battery, chums who had fought together since the battle of the Ypres Salient. It was just before the opening of the Drocourt-Queant show when it was vitally important that telephone connection between the battery and brigade headquarters should be maintained at all costs. They discovered that the line was down, and though the enemy was straafing with a very deadly shell fire, they methodically went to work to find and repair the break. This done, they discovered that other batteries on the line were cut off and they proceeded to repair the whole line, just getting their "O.K." as "zero"

hour struck. One of them was wounded subsequently while employed on similar work.

In the opening phase of an attack, when we were pushing ahead rapidly, it was, of course, essential that Signals keep up with the advance. Thus, by the night of Sept. 27, they had pushed forward an air line 8,500 yards, or one and a half miles east of the Canal du Nord. Such examples are typical of the spirit actuating the entire Signal Service, not least efficient members of whom are the despatch riders, who enveloped in white dust or coated in mud, pursue their course unheeding over broken and shell-tossed roads, familiar figures of the battlefield, more often than not compelled to wobble their motor cycles along the ditch when passing moving troops.

CHAPTER IV

OPERATIONS: OCT. 20-30.

ONE of the difficulties of our advance at this time is the fact that we are unable to shoot the Boche out of towns and villages because of the civilian population. Thus, at Denain, the advance of the 4th. Canadian Division was held up for some time on this account, and it was not until the evening of Oct. 20 that our men entered the town, and even then Boche machine-gunners were still clinging to the eastern outskirts. This honor fell to the 10th. Brigade, the 47th. Battalion, Western Ontario, actually passing through the town together with the 4th. Canadian Machine-Gunners. They met there a royal welcome.

Never will men of the Canadian Corps forget Denain. The private in the ranks fared as well and was made as much one of the family as the officer. It is a humble little manufacturing town, with nothing about it of beauty or architectural excellence; its streets are squalid and dirty; the country dull and flat, relieved only by the pyramidlike slag heaps. We were to visit many fine places and live in fat quarters, from Mons on to the palaces of Bonn, with a bath-tub for each soldier; but in all this clustered memory no jewel shines so bright, so constant and with such a hidden fire as this of the kind folk of Denain. They struck no medals, they named no public squares in our honor, but they gave us their whole heart, and with it their uttermost possession—Denain, grimy little town, of shining and cherished memory.

From the blighted village of Lewarde Canadian Corps Headquarters moved into comfortable billets, and in Denain we enjoyed after many weeks the luxury of clean linen and all the ameliorations of civilization. Our billet was in the modest home of a widowed lady in the Boulevard Caraman. The

story of the family was very simple. The eldest son, a priest, had joined the army at the opening of the war and was somewhere in the Vosges; the second son on another front. In those days this lady had kept house with her youngest son, Jean, and two daughters, Louise, now aged sixteen, and Yvonne, aged thirteen. German officers, coming and going continually, had been billeted upon them. "But we had no converse with them," said Madame Lesage. "There were their rooms, clean and sweet for the dirty fellows; but in those four years, as they tramped day by day up and down stairs, we had nothing to say to them. . . . Once only Louise here slapped the face of one of them.

"Yes, our little Louise is of a courage! Here you must know was a hospital for English prisoners broken down by toil and want, and a good physician of Denain devoted himself entirely to their aid and comfort. Little as the people here had themselves, they smuggled food to these poor men, and our Louise too, slipping behind the back of a sentry, took them little packets. Any they caught they whipped or imprisoned and threatened to kill. And our Jean too . . ."

"Jean, did we not tell you about our beloved Jean, Monsieur?" bursts in little Yvonne. "He was going to L'Ecole Militaire when war broke out—to become an 'officier'—and we lied about his age when they registered us all. But last year a neighbor—a despicable traitor—told the Boche he was eighteen and training for a soldier. So they took him away . . . they took him away and we have never heard."

They had had no word of any of them for weeks and weeks; no word at all of Jean. These people were reduced to the barest necessities of life, and with our coming conditions for a time were even worse, for the Spanish Relief ceased and it was some time before we could organize anything beyond the rations of the Army. In four years they had not tasted sugar.

In this beautiful little menage, one blushed continually to find that to be a Canadian was of necessity to be also a hero, a soldier of transcendent qualities, for in Denain, long before

our coming, the renown and fame of the Canadian Corps had gone before. Many a jolly Canadian soldier no doubt recounted here to a breathless household how he too had stormed Vimy Ridge and taken part in the victories of Amiens and Cambrai. The Vimy Ridge tradition, in fact, was to be expected here, for Denain and Lens are situate on the same coal-seam and have a community of interest. Certainly there was nothing artificial or "put-on" about this high renown into which we had so unexpectedly entered; it was a thing of growth and root; we luxuriated in it, and nowhere we went thereafter had for us quite the same exotic warmth of welcome. Indeed, we were to visit prosperous communities, talk with well-informed people, and find to our sad disappointment they were completely ignorant on the great subject of the Canadian Corps. It is true we left them in better case.

All this found fitting expression in a solemn service of thanksgiving celebrated one Sunday in the old church, to which Canadian soldiers were specially invited, and when a memorial service was held for the Canadian dead who had fallen. The Corps Commander, the Prince of Wales, Sir David Watson, Commander of the 4th. Canadian Division, which captured the town, and his staff were present.

One was talking many months after with a demobilized soldier. "Take it all in all," he said, "there was no place like Denain. I never slept in so good a bed before or since, and the woman of the house insisted on cleaning my boots!"

We are shortly to move on to Valenciennes, where, in an imposing mansion, one's billet was cheerless—no clean sheets, no bright fire, none of those amenities to which one had become so quickly accustomed. From there in due course we move to Mons, to another mansion, where the Chatelaine, an aged Belgian lady, greets us by saying that the German officers who had just left were true gentlemen and she hoped we should behave as well! And again, no clean sheets, no brisk fire.

Happily in those days a reasonable excuse presents itself to return to Denain, to Madame and Louise and Yvonne. One

knocks at the familiar door and Yvonne rushes out. "Oh, Monsieur, Monsieur, how splendid! You are just in time to see our big brother who has arrived this day on leave, and we have had a letter from our Jean, who is well and will soon be home!"

We shake hands with a bearded giant in light blue. He thanks us again and again—for what? We cannot tell; for perhaps accepting so gracefully the kindnesses poured upon us. But it is fine to hear that this veteran of France also has the very highest opinion of "le Corps Canadien"; has heard of its exploits in the far Vosges. Somewhere in Belgium a little letter overtakes us—from Yvonne. They are all united again, after four years—what happiness!

From Denain on the fighting stiffened and as we were well out in front of troops on either flank we advanced cautiously, pushing ahead only when ground could be gained with a minimum of casualties. Nevertheless it was our object to prevent the enemy getting away at leisure, and we trod closely on his heels, our outposts feeling their way along and driving in his rear guards. Thus his main body was never more than four to six hours ahead and we prevented him wrecking the country in his passage, though it was systematically sacked and looted, while the dirt and stench he left behind him were indescribable.

In dealing with enemy posts a return to some of the practice of trench warfare obtained; Stokes guns, with a range of 500 yards, whose day was regarded as done once we forsook a warfare of positions, now came into play, and even more effective were the Newton mortars, with a range of 1,200 yards. Bits of cover were utilized to bring these up within range of the enemy machine-gun nests, and at the first round the Boche gunners had their "wind up" and got off.

Very effective work was done with these guns mounted in armored cars, of which a supply from Brutinel's Brigade had been divided among the Brigades and were placed in attack directly under Battalion Commanders. They were thus

enabled to circulate on various roads, and outflank small machine-gun nests and positions that had been holding up the infantry, causing considerable casualties to the enemy and materially assisting the advance.

This open warfare through a rolling country provided a magnificent training for our troops, who fast closed up the scars of recent fighting and soon presented a fresh and smart appearance. They were in excellent spirits, the only grievance being the ever-lengthening distance from the leave base, a real hardship for the men whose turn it was. Except for units actually in the line—and these were but few, for our Brigades attacked at the most on a two-Battalion front, while the 11th. Brigade in particular, Brig.-General Odlum, advanced all the way from the Canal du Nord to Valenciennes and beyond on a one-Battalion front—the nature of the present operations rather resembled peace time manoeuvres than the battle tactics to which our troops had been habituated.

On Oct. 20 the 2nd. Canadian Division went back to rest, the 4th. Canadian Division having established contact at Denain with the 51st. Division, advancing from the south on the right bank of the Scheldt. On this date still further progress was made, the 1st. Canadian Division capturing Hasnon and Wallers and the 4th. Canadian Division Haveluy, this village being taken by the 54th. Battalion, of the Kootenay. By Oct. 21 the 1st. Canadian Division had penetrated the Foret-de-Vicoigne to the road leading from Valenciennes northwest to St. Amand, while the 4th. Canadian Division had captured the following villages:—Wavrechain, Rouvignies and Prouvy, by units of the 10th. Brigade; and Bellaing, Herin and Aubry, by the 11th. Brigade, with the 87th. Battalion, Grenadier Guards of Montreal. Its outpost line was on the western outskirts of La Sentinelle and Petite Foret.

On Oct. 22 the 1st. Canadian Division, which had battled its way forward without a halt from northeast of Arras on Oct. 6, was relieved by the 3rd. Canadian Division. Next day we had reached a line along the Scheldt Canal to the Faubourg

de Paris, thence along the canal to Fresnes, thence to Odome, fronting on the Scheldt opposite Conde.

The advance was continued with the 4th. Canadian Division on the right and the 3rd. Canadian Division on the left, the 10th. Brigade being on our extreme right, along the left bank of the Scheldt, south of which was the area of the XXII Corps. On the left of the 10th. was the 11th. Brigade, working on a line drawn from just north of Denain through Anzin, the northwestern suburb of Valenciennes; left again was the 9th. Brigade, and, beyond them, the 7th. Brigade, working along the northern boundary of the Corps which ran from Douai to the northern fringe of the Foret de Raismes, some 14,000 yards north of Valenciennes. North of us was the VIII Corps.

Everywhere civilians were released and we did what was possible to relieve their necessities. It was a triumphal progress. Their joy and contempt of danger were extravagant, and, in a country that so far had escaped the ravages of war, they appeared to have no idea of the perils wherein they moved. Thus, when the 75th. Battalion, of Toronto, passed through Anzin into the village of Beuvrages north of Valenciennes, the civilians brought them coffee, regardless of the heavy machine-gun fire from the far side of the Scheldt. An old peasant was serving coffee to two of our men when a shell burst in his backyard. They immediately dived for the cellar, crying, "Au cave, Monsieur, au cave!" But, with shattered glass around him, he proceeded methodically to make up his charcoal fire.

The enemy indeed kept up a heavy fire all along the canal, and paid special attention to our exposed communications, a number of our men, and even the 11th. Brigade Staff, being badly gassed.

Emaciated though they were, the Frenchmen of military age thus repatriated hurried off to enlist. Pitiable was the condition of British prisoners, several of whom were now released. The Boche made it a crime for the peasantry to

give them so much as a cup of water, and, set to heavy work in their weakened condition, most of them were little better than skeletons. A Canadian trooper, of the Fort Garry Horse, of Winnipeg, captured in November, 1917, when his squadron was surrounded south of Cambrai, and who now made good his escape from Valenciennes, weighed only 86 pounds, his proper weight being 160 pounds. He said the Boche admitted they were beaten and that they were going back to Germany. The condition of captured German horses showed the straits to which they were reduced.

The operations of this period are described by Sir Arthur Currie as follows:—"On Oct. 19 the advance was continued on the whole Corps front, nearly 40 towns and villages being wrested from the enemy, including the large town of Denain.

"The XXII Corps, advancing on our right from the south, gained touch with the 4th. Canadian Division just east of Denain, on the evening of Oct. 19, pinching out the 2nd. Canadian Division, which was then concentrated in the Auberchicourt area, where good billets were available.

"In spite of bad weather and increased resistance more ground was gained on Oct. 20, and the villages of Hasnon, Les Faux, Wallers and Haveluy, with a large population, were freed.

"During the day resistance had stiffened all along the line. The ground over which we were advancing was very flat, and there was no tactical advantage to be gained by pushing forward, and a further advance would also increase the difficulties of supply. In addition on the left, the VIII Corps had not been able to cope with the supply question and had not advanced in conformity with our progress. In view of these considerations, orders were issued that Divisions were to maintain touch with the enemy without becoming involved in heavy fighting.

"For a time on Oct. 20 the 4th. Canadian Division was held up just east of Denain by machine-gun and artillery fire, and it was not until late in the afternoon that our troops could make progress there.

"Continuing the advance on Oct. 21, a footing was gained in the Foret-de-Vicoigne, and the following villages were captured:—Aremberg, Oisy, Herin, Rouvigne, Aubry, Petite Foret, Anzin, Prouvy, Bellaing and Wavrechain. As on the previous day, all these villages contained civilians, who subsequently suffered considerably from deliberate hostile shelling.

"The 1st. Canadian Division had now been in the line for two weeks without having an opportunity to rest and refit since the hard-fought battle of the Canal du Nord, and orders were issued for its relief by the 3rd. Canadian Division. At dawn on Oct. 22, in order that touch with the enemy be maintained, the 1st. Canadian Division pushed forward. Following closely, the 3rd. Canadian Division passed through the 1st. Canadian Division during the forenoon, on the left Brigade front, about 9 a.m., on the line of the St. Amand-Raismes Road, and on the right about noon on the line of the St. Amand-Raismes railway, the Foret-de-Vicoigne having been cleared of the enemy. On relief, the 1st. Canadian Division came into rest billets in the Somain-Pecquencourt-Masny area.

"The 3rd. and 4th. Canadian Divisions pushed on during Oct. 22, and by nightfall Trith St. Leger, La Vignoble, La Sentinelle, Waast-le-Haut, Beauvrages, Bruay, and practically the whole of the large forest of Raismes, were in our hands. On the left Brigade front of the 4th. Canadian Division the Scheldt Canal had been reached in places. A very large area northeast of Valenciennes and a smaller area to the southwest had been flooded, and to the west of the city the Canal itself provided a serious obstacle. To the southwest, beyond the flooded area, Mont Houy and the Famars Ridge made a natural line of defense.

"The XXII Corps on our right had been held up along the Ecaillon River, and the VIII Corps on our left had not been able to make any considerable advance, chiefly owing to supply difficulties, and were still some distance behind us.

"The Divisions continued to push forward in the face of

steadily increasing opposition, and by Oct. 25 had reached the Canal and the western edge of the inundated area along the whole Corps front.

"Our troops had had a very arduous pursuit, and the rail-head for supplies and ammunition was still very far to the rear. It was therefore decided that we should make good the west bank of the Canal and stand fast until the flanking Corps had made progress.

"Attempts to cross the Canal proved that the enemy was holding in strength a naturally strong position, and it was ordered that no crossing in force would be attempted without reference to Corps Headquarters. The Engineers established dumps of material well forward on selected sites so that the bridges necessary to cross the Canal on the resumption of our advance could be constructed without delay."

A glance at the map will show that the Scheldt Canal, after passing Denain, takes a turn of four or five thousand yards southeast and then, at the village of Thiant, on its south bank, where the Ecaillon River joins the canal, turns again northeast to where some seven or eight thousand yards lower down it skirts the west flank of Valenciennes. Thence it continues in a generally northeasterly direction some thirteen or fourteen thousand yards to Conde, which is but two or three miles from the Belgian border. At Conde the Scheldt swings off at right angles to the northwest. Contained within this right angle is the Foret de Raismes, through which our troops had penetrated. They were therefore several miles beyond Valenciennes on the left or north bank of the Scheldt.

The enemy had flooded the canal from Conde, raising the waters not only as far as the city itself, but a considerable distance west of it, half way to Thiant. Some of our troops, of the 10th. Brigade, of an adventurous spirit, sought to enter Valenciennes from the south by crossing this inundated area by boat, but their craft was promptly riddled by machine-gun bullets, and they had difficulty in making the shore again. So far, therefore, as the Canadian Corps in its present area was

concerned, no attack on Valenciennes was feasible. Many civilians were known to be still in the city and so we could not shell the enemy out, quite apart from the desire not to damage a city still intact. On the other hand the Boche made full use of this immunity by establishing batteries of artillery and machine-guns at every point of vantage and maintaining on our lines a continual harassing fire. It was obvious that until the Corps on our right advanced along the south bank of the Scheldt we could only mark time. Happily the weather had taken a turn for the better; we luxuriated in a belated Indian Summer, Squaw Summer, as they call it in the West.

The Corps Commander explains the situation and disposition as follows:—"It had become apparent that unless the enemy withdrew, Valenciennes could only be taken from the south. The XXII Corps, on the right, had meanwhile succeeded in crossing the Ecaillon River after a hard fight and captured the Famars Ridge. They had, however, been unable to take Mount Houy, which commanded Valenciennes from the south.

"On Oct. 27 the First Army Commander outlined the plan for operations to be carried out in conjunction with attacks on a large scale by the Third and Fourth Armies to the south as follows:—

"(a) The capture of Mount Houy and Aulnoy—to be carried out by the XXII Corps on the morning of Oct. 28.

"(b) The capture of the high ground overlooking Valenciennes from the south—to be carried out by the Canadian Corps on a subsequent date, probably Oct. 30.

"(c) The capture of the high ground east of Valenciennes —to be carried out after (b) above, probably on Nov. 1.

"Valenciennes would thus be outflanked from the south. The Canadian Corps would take over, probably on the night

of Oct. 28-29, the left Brigade frontage of the XXII Corps (approximately 2,500 yards) in order to carry out phase (b) and (c) of this operation. The above attacks were to be carried out simultaneously with the attacks of the Third and Fourth Armies.

"In accordance with the above, instructions were issued to the 3rd. Canadian Division to take over the frontage of the left Brigade of the 4th. Canadian Division. The 4th. Canadian Division was, in turn, ordered to relieve the left Brigade of the XXII Corps (51st. Division), both side-slips to take place on the night of Oct. 28-29, subsequent to the capture of Mount Houy by the XXII Corps.

"The attack of the 51st. Division on Mount Houy on Oct. 28 was not successful. In the first rush the troops succeeded in gaining a foothold on the objective, but were subsequently driven out by repeated counter-attacks. In view of this, the relief of the left Brigade of that Division by the 4th. Canadian Division was postponed. During the night of Oct. 28-29, however, the 3rd. Canadian Division relieved the left Brigade of the 4th. Canadian Division."

During the month of October we had captured 2,950 prisoners, 136 guns and 467 machine-guns, 42 trench mortars, six anti-tank rifles, six locomotives and other material and rolling stock.

CHAPTER V

CAPTURE OF VALENCIENNES

THE Canadian Corps had now been held up a week along the left bank of the Scheldt, harassed by constant fire from the other side, and no progress was possible until an advance had been made on the city along the right bank, through Maing, Famars and Aulnoy.

To understand the situation a brief description is necessary. Valenciennes lies in the valley of the Scheldt, at the junction of that river with the Rhonelle, the civic insignia representing two swans, emblematic of the two rivers. The city slopes up from the canal to heights on the east, crowned by the museum and a handsome modern water-tower. Further east, beyond its outskirts, is still higher ground.

We have seen how Thiant lies on the right bank of the elbow of the Scheldt to the south where it is joined by the Ecaillon river. Two thousand yards lower along the right bank is the straggling and low-lying town of Maing, and from here down to Valenciennes and thence to Conde enemy engineers had inundated the bed of the canal to a width of a thousand yards and in certain areas a great deal more, making passage by troops in face of machine-gun fire impossible.

Parallel to the Scheldt, 2,000 yards distant at the narrowest point, the Rhonelle river also flows south to Valenciennes, and between these two streams a tongue of high land runs from behind Maing to the southern suburbs. Two thousand yards east by north of Maing is the village of Famars, occupying high ground overlooking the Rhonelle valley. Fifteen hundred yards further north, and about 3,000 yards south of Valenciennes, is the dominating feature of Mont Houy, whose height of 83 metres raises it some 40 or 50 metres above the valleys on either side. From this point the ridge falls down

gently to Valenciennes, but on its southwest and west faces the hill presents sharp steep contours, clothed in wood, and making it very difficult to assault from that direction. The approach from Famars is more open and the rise less abrupt.

The position is one of considerable natural strength, of which the enemy had made best use, turning scattered farmhouses into machine-gun posts and establishing batteries along the ridge. In particular the steel works on the Scheldt west and northwest of Mont Houy had been strongly fortified. From these an entrenched line had been dug right athwart the ridge, east and west, just behind Mont Houy, due east to connect with the village of Aulnoy, lying in the valley of the Rhonelle. Behind all was the determination of the enemy to make a definite stand in front of Valenciennes. Backed by the inundated areas of the Scheldt, he here sought to hold a pivot on which the retreat now in progress both north and south might be firmly based.

The narrative of the First Army, quoted above, thus describes what was happening on our immediate right:—"Oct. 25—The attack was renewed on the XXII Corps front and the 51st. Division cleared up the ground to near the Valenciennes-Le Quesnoy railway. At 6 p.m. the enemy, after throwing over a great weight of high-explosive and gas shells, made a counter-attack. The Argyll and Sutherlands on the left—who, like the rest, had been wearing gas masks that day for hours—got up, rushed with the bayonet to meet the counter-attack, drove it back, and actually advanced their position about 500 yards.

"During the earlier counter-attacks the enemy had lost very many men, in spite of the fact that he used low-flying 'planes, gunning our men to keep down their fire.

"The 4th. British Division pushed on and took Querenaing. In the afternoon the enemy counter-attacked, but fruitlessly.

"The Rhonelle was now immediately in front. The XXII Corps line ran from the inundations southwest of Valenciennes in a southeasterly direction to the Bavay road. The inunda-

tion-line was turned and an advance to the northeast, with the left flank on the flooded area, would free Valenciennes.

"To secure the crossing of the Rhonelle, the 4th. British Division successfully established a bridgehead east of the village of Artres.

"Preparations were now made for an attack to cross the Rhonelle, take Preseau and the heights to the immediate south of Valenciennes, while the Canadians were to attack from the west through the gaps in the flooded area. These operations would mean the restoration to France of Valenciennes, the only remaining French town of importance on the British front. It meant also that the elaborately prepared system of inundations which the enemy had, by much destruction of valuable works, set up as a barrier, had proved futile to arrest the rapid advance of the British Army.

"Oct. 26—On the XXII Corps front, south of Valenciennes, the 51st. Division attacked again and took Famars, a dominant hill between the Canal and the Aulnoy-Famars road. Some got to Mont Houy, but were unable to remain. Famars, which was full of civilians, was suffering from the enemy's high explosive and especially gas-shelling. A French officer in liason succeeded in getting a number of these civilians out, little by little.

"Oct. 27—The enemy counter-attacked again and got into Famars. The Gordons ejected him, retook the village, and kept it.

"Oct. 28—An attack was again made on Mont Houy, and the Seaforths got through to a Boche trench on the north of the Aulnoy-Poirien road. But the enemy was resolved to hold this hill, and by a strong counter-attack forced our troops back to the southwest of Houy Wood.

"Oct. 28 and 29—On this night the 49th. Division began to relieve the 51st. As fighting was going on, the 6th. Argylls were temporarily left with the incoming 49th., and repulsed two counter-attacks that morning before leaving the line, thus keeping up the unsurpassed record of the 51st. for being in all

the fighting and carrying success with them in all situations. No division of the entire army has done sterner, more efficient, nor more constant fighting than these glorious Territorials of the North."

In a direct attack over this same ground by the Canadian Corps, its long flank on the other side of the Scheldt, instead of being as hitherto a weakness, could be turned to good account, because all our batteries could be brought to play upon the high ground around Famars and Mont Houy, and, after the miscarriage described above, the decision was reached that the 4th. Canadian Division should make the attempt.

The task was entrusted to the 10th. Brigade, to whose command Brig.-General J. M. Ross, former Commander of the 5th. Brigade but who had now returned recovered from the wound he had received in the Amiens show, had succeeded on the appointment of Brig.-General R. J. F. Hayter to be Brigadier-General, General Staff. Throughout these operations and until the last few days, the B.G.G.S. of the Canadian Corps (who might be described as Chief-of-Staff) had been a very capable Imperial officer, Brig.-General N. W. Webber, but the latter had now rejoined the British Army. General Hayter, however, was not to be kept out of this show, and during its progress he established himself at headquarters of his old Brigade, with General Ross, at Maing.

The 10th. Brigade relieved the XXII Corps in the section immediately south of the Scheldt on the night of Oct. 29-30, the attack being set for the morning of Nov. 1, when, in conjunction, the 12th. Brigade and troops of the 3rd. Canadian Division were to endeavor to establish crossings of the canal north of the city. Preparations for the attack are thus described by the Corps Commander:—"Orders were received that the Canadian Corps was to carry out all three phases of the operation against Valenciennes in conjunction with attacks of the XXII Corps. Accordingly, the 4th. Canadian Division was ordered to relieve the left Brigade of the 51st.

Division during the night of Oct. 29-30 on the line then held, and to be prepared to carry out the attack on the morning of Nov. 1.

"In conjunction with the attack the 3rd. Canadian Division was ordered to cross the Canal and the inundated area on its front, and establish a bridgehead to enable the Engineers to reconstruct the bridges leading into the city.

"In the short period available elaborate preparations were made for the support of the attack. The position was eminently suitable for the use of enfilade as well as frontal fire, the general direction of the attack on Mont Houy being parallel to our front, and full advantage of this was taken in arranging the Artillery and Machine-Gun barrages.

"The application of Heavy Artillery fire was restricted because the enemy had retained many civilians in Valenciennes and the adjoining villages. Strict orders were issued that the city and villages were not to be bombarded, with the exception of a row of houses on the eastern side of the Canal which were occupied by a large number of machine-guns. To hinder the good observation which the enemy would otherwise have been able to enjoy from the city and village, very elaborate arrangements were made to place heavy smoke screens along certain areas.

"Despite great difficulties of transport, the supplies of ammunition, bridging material, etc., moved forward were sufficient, and before dawn on Nov. 1 all preparations were completed.

"The time for the assault was fixed for 5.15 a.m., Nov. 1. The plan of attack was as follows:—

"The right Brigade of the 4th. Canadian Division (10th. Canadian Infantry Brigade, Brig.-General J. M. Ross), southeast of the Canal, was to carry out the attack at "zero" hour under a co-ordinated barrage in a northerly direction and capture Mont Houy, Aulnoy, and the high ground south of Valenciennes, and then to exploit the success by pushing on to the high ground east of the city.

"Subsequently, the troops northwest of the Canal (left Brigade—4th. Canadian Division and the 3rd. Canadian Division) were to force crossings north of the city and encircle it from that side."

"Zero" hour was set for 5.15 a.m., and the men went into the attack in the dark, supported by a concentric barrage of great power. All the first objectives were gained by the hour set, 8 a.m., our troops being aided in their advance when dawn broke by a very efficient smoke barrage, completely obscuring the enemy's observation.

The attack was made by the 44th. Battalion, of New Brunswick though originally recruited at Winnipeg, on the right, with the 47th. Battalion, Western Ontario, on the left. After taking Famars—which again had fallen into enemy hands—the 44th. fought their way into Aulnoy, where it was only after hand-to-hand fighting that the enemy was overcome. The 46th. Battalion, South Saskatchewan, here leap-frogged, pushing on the attack along the left bank of the Rhonelle to the outskirts of Marly, a suburb on the southwest of the city, where were more steel works, stoutly defended.

Meantime on the left the 47th. had captured Mont Houy and the trench system beyond, where the 50th. Battalion, Calgary, came up in support, pushing on the attack along the ridge. We encountered bitter resistance from enemy machine-gun posts, particularly from the garrison established in the Poirien farm, composed of very young troops, who fought recklessly, refusing to surrender even when we were upon them with the cold steel and bombs. We captured here 20 machine-guns.

Some other of the enemy troops were not so steadfast, a whole company surrendering, its officers saying that they had heard over night that Austria had surrendered and it was useless for Germany to fight longer. It developed that the enemy was preparing to attack that morning with three regiments, and these were smothered by our barrage, his losses being exceptionally heavy, particularly along the Rhonelle valley.

In this very brilliant action the 10th. Brigade captured over 1,800 prisoners, more than the entire strength of its infantry engaged, and we buried 800 Boche on the field.

It was dashing work, calling for individual initiative and sacrifice, as the following incident will illustrate. During the attack of the 46th. Battalion, Sergt. Hugh Cairns, of North Saskatoon, found that his platoon was being exposed to the fire of a machine-gun post. Without a moment's hesitation he seized a Lewis gun and single-handed, in face of direct fire, rushed the post, killing the crew of five and capturing the gun. Later, when the line was held up by machine-gun fire, he again rushed forward, killing 12 of the enemy and capturing 18 with two guns. Still further on, when the advance was held up by both field and machine-gun fire, and although wounded, he led a small party and outflanked the position, killing many, forcing about 50 to surrender and capturing all the guns. Not content with this, after our line had been consolidated, he went forward with a battle patrol to exploit Marly, held by the enemy in force, and after a stiff fight forced 60 of the enemy to surrender. Whilst disarming this party he was severely wounded by fresh enemy elements. Nevertheless he opened fire on these and inflicted heavy losses. Finally he was rushed by about 20 enemy and collapsed from weakness and loss of blood. Throughout this operation he showed the highest degree of valor and his leadership greatly contributed to the success of the attack. He died from his wounds the following day.

The events of this day are described in the narrative of the First Army as follows:—"Nov. 1—The capture of the ground south of Valenciennes between the Rhonelle river and the Scheldt canal was of extreme importance so as to compel the enemy to evacuate the town. The Canadian Corps were holding the western approaches to the town and the western bank of the Scheldt canal, and their guns were able to batter the tongue of land where the 51st. Division had been fighting. An attack by Canadian troops in a northerly direction from

about Aulnoy could thus be supported by their artillery fire from south, west and north, and offered the best and safest means of capturing Valenciennes. The Canadian Corps relieved the XXII Corps (51st. Division) between the Rhonelle and the Scheldt, and, attacking in conjunction with the XXII Corps (and they with the Third Army), in extremely severe fighting took Mont Houy and the western part of Aulnoy, also establishing a bridgehead north of Valenciennes over the inundations.

"A large concentration of artillery was used and the enemy's losses were very heavy. Over 800 Germans were counted and buried in a small part of the battlefield near Aulnoy, on which the fire of 42 6-inch howitzers (among other calibres) was concentrated. The Germans resolutely fought to defend the whole position and clung with determination to the watery corner near Conde. But their defenses were constructed to resist attack from the west, and the attack of the Canadians from the south was too much for them.

"As the northern Division of the XXII Corps, between the 4th. Canadian and 4th. British Divisions, the 49th. Division jumped off from a line northeast of Famars to half way between Famars and Artres towards the Rhonelle. This they crossed and advanced as far as the Preseau-Marly road to the Marly steelworks. The fighting was very severe, the enemy holding strongly.

"To their south the 4th. British Division crossed the river. Curiously enough the crossing was facilitated by the fact that the enemy had left many felled trees lying from bank to bank, across which our men walked. Some of the 4th. got into Preseau, but the enemy launched a counter-attack with a fresh Division and our troops were pushed out.

"In the afternoon four companies of Canadians entered Valenciennes from the west. 2,750 prisoners were taken in this action."

At 8 a.m., so soon as the success of the operation to the south was established, the 12th. Canadian Infantry Brigade

began drifting outposts across the canal into Valenciennes, establishing posts along the east side, seizing the railway and yards, and holding a line in the southern outskirts of the city up to the Place de Famars inclusive.

This was a very dashing operation, and owed much of its success to the fine co-operation of Canadian Engineers and Artillery. Gunners of the 58th. C.F.A., wrapping the wheels of an 18-pounder in carpet, brought the gun down secretly at night into a house on the west side of the canal just opposite an enemy machine-gun post. known to command the only practical crossing. At "zero" hour next morning the gun was fired through the wall at a point-blank range of only a few yards, blowing the machine-guns and crews into the air.

The 38th. Battalion, of Ottawa, crossed over the locks on the southwest of the city by a footbridge under a heavy enfilading fire from machine-guns, and proceeded to consolidate the line of the railway. A party of our troops began working their way thence north into the old town, but just beyond the Place de Famars a Frenchwoman run out, waving them back. The enemy had established a battery sweeping the boulevard, with wire entanglements beyond, and but for this timely warning the party must have been wiped out.

Simultaneously the 72nd. Battalion, of Vancouver, effected a crossing lower down the canal, and after sharp fighting succeeded in establishing a line on the northwest outskirts of the city. Orders were given to hold the line thus won that night, the object being to save casualties and possible destruction of the city by street fighting.

Early next morning, Nov. 2, the 38th., supported on the right by troops of the 11th. Brigade, who had passed through the 10th. Brigade in the night, and on the left by the 72nd. Battalion, passed through the city to its eastern boundary. Two Canadian gunners, with two French interpreters, at ten o'clock that morning swarmed up the tower of the Hotel de Ville, cut down the German standard, and hoisted the tricolor.

Valenciennes was ours, but the enemy still clung tenaci-

ously to the ridge immediately east of the city. We attacked in force again and drove him out of the strong positions he held between St. Saulve and the Chateau Houris.

On our right the XXII Corps, after being checked at noon on Nov. 1 by determined counter-attacks, had pushed on and established contact with us at Marly. Further down the canal troops of the 3rd. Canadian Division, ably supported by Canadian Engineers, had succeeded in consolidating a bridgehead north of the city.

Sir Arthur Currie's account of this day's fighting is as follows:—"At 5.15 a.m., Nov. 1, the attack was launched, and from the first went entirely according to plan on the Canadian Corps front. The enemy barrage dropped quickly and was very heavy, but shortly afterwards slackened down under the influence of our effective counter-battery fire. In the meantime the attacking Infantry got well away, advancing under a most excellent barrage, and reached their objective, the line of the Valenciennes-Maubeuge railway, on time right behind the barrage.

"The fighting during the advance was heavy, especially around the houses along the Famars-Valenciennes road and in Aulnoy.

"The thoroughness of the preparations made for this small but important battle is better illustrated by the following striking figures:—Number of enemy dead buried, over 800; prisoners captured, over 1,800 (exceeding the number of assaulting troops); our casualties (approximately), 80 killed and 300 wounded.

"On the left, the left Brigade of the 4th. Canadian Division and the 3rd. Canadian Division had, in the meantime, succeeded in crossing the canal. Bridgeheads were established north of the city, the station and railway yards were seized, and the Engineers commenced the construction of bridges.

"The enemy did not counter-attack against the Canadian Corps during the day, but continued to hold out strongly in

the southern outskirts of Valenciennes and Marly, and in the steel works to the southeast until dark. Two counter-attacks against the XXII Corps front on the right caused some anxiety, but that flank was strengthened and no trouble developed.

"During the night the 4th. Canadian Division took over an additional Brigade frontage from the 49th. Division (XXII Corps) on the right preparatory to the capture of the high ground east of Marly.

"Patrols of the 4th. Canadian Division pushed forward during the night and ascertained that the enemy was withdrawing. In the early morning our troops had completely cleared Valenciennes and Marly, and patrols had entered St. Saulve."

CHAPTER VI

WELCOME TO THE DELIVERER

ON the morning of Oct. 2 the civil authorities transmitted the following message through Canadian Corps Signals to the French Government:—"After 50 months of hard captivity but always resolute and inspired by the memory of her sons heroically fallen on the field of honor, the City of Valenciennes, cruelly separated from her brave Mayor, Dr. Truchon, and with a great number of her inhabitants in exile, addresses to the French Government the expression of her admiration for the victorious armies of the Entente and her patriotic cry of joy on the day of her deliverance."

Dr. Truchon had persistently opposed the exactions of the German Military Governor, until finally he was exiled. Acting in his place remained MM. Billiet and Damien, who, together with M. Rene Delame, representative of the American Relief Committee, administered faithfully to the wants of their people and were not to be deterred by threats and commands from doing what was possible to mitigate their unhappy condition. For their lot was very miserable. Except for a little meal, these depended entirely on American and Spanish relief for their food, and the one bright spot in a story of oppression and violence is the figure of a German, Rittmeister Venerbourg, associated with M. Delame in the relief, who did his best to see that it was honestly distributed.

The normal population of Valenciennes is about 35,000 and on Oct. 13 the entire population was evacuated by order, the movement continuing for a fortnight until on our entry only 4,500 of the original inhabitants were left, many being too sick to move. About 25,000 people remained in the city, but most of these were from Cambrai, whence 50,000 evacuées had passed through Valenciennes, making the long journey on

foot, the movement starting so soon as the advance of the Canadian Corps over the Canal du Nord developed. These poor folk passed through Valenciennes to Mons and Maubeuge at the rate of about 5,000 a day and added immensely to the difficulties of rationing the civil population. Many were so exhausted they could not continue their flight.

On the morning of Nov. 1, when the battle opened, the entire civilian population was paraded in the Place d'Armes and ordered to evacuate immediately. Soon the roads leading east were hopelessly choked and the movement was stopped. That day there was great running to and fro by the garrison, and at night the enemy marched out. As they left they cut the water supply, destroyed the reservoirs, and blew-up the power house supplying the city with electric light. Hardly were they clear of the town, hitherto undamaged, than they turned their batteries upon it, doing some damage in the Place d'Armes and to the east end of the cathedral, raining down phosphor shells with the intention of setting the city afire. Only the prompt entry of our troops, and the vigorous offensive we pushed out both north and east, saved the city.

Our troops were rapturously received. The enemy had filled the city with gas, and women and children, their eyes red-rimmed and streaming, pressed upon them, embracing "les braves Canadiens." From out their slender store they produced hot coffee and a curious substance made from coarse meal, known to them as bread. Called together by the two acting-mayors, the city council promptly adopted resolutions thanking their deliverers and renaming the Place de Famars, where we had first entered, the Place du Canada, with the promise that a worthy monument would be erected in that spacious square to the Canadian soldiers fallen in battle.

In contrast to Cambrai and Douai, no systematic sack had taken place here, but individual soldiers had looted at will. All the works of art had been removed from the art gallery and the museum, where still were a number of statues packed ready for shipment. The enemy exactions throughout these

years had been very severe and even meticulous. Thus an old lady had 23 hens. She was ordered to supply 15 eggs a day, or pay a mark for each egg short. The hens went broody and in despair of the daily drain upon her purse, she killed the hens and sent them in a basket to the Herr Commandant. She was fined 10,000 marks.

One comes back again and again to the contemplation of the French people of the evacuated areas. They are everywhere—on the roads, in the villages; bearing without complaint nor heroics their heavy burden, hiding in their hearts their sorrows that they may turn a joyous face to the deliverer. Of all the deep-bitten impressions one must carry away none is so indelible as that of this patient endurance, the fine quiet courage and elasticity of spirit that may bend but not break; wherein lies the secret of the mute but unshaken fortitude that suffers adversity—hunger, cold, jeers and insults of the invader, loss of household goods, loss, too, of husband, brother and ailing child—but does not despair.

Their intense patriotism carries them through. Self is immolated in the State. One asks oneself, having lost all, what remains? There remains France and the promise of the generations to come. For the rest, there is the comfortable spectacle of the beaten enemy.

One dwells on these people released from their captivity because it is for that our men have suffered and endured; here are the ripe fruits of their sacrifice; in their youth they were consecrated to this brave purpose; its attainment ennobles their arms, sets a crown upon their staunch array. It is not for a little thing they have fought and died. Out of all the materialism of war there emerges again the high idealism that set their feet along that bitter road.

They are all but inarticulate, these peasants. It is difficult to enlist their interest in the recital of their experiences they would sooner forget. They take it all as a matter of course—for the man a soldier's grave; for the woman unwept tears. Such is war to the French nation. Little is left of "la gloire."

And now that tardy victory breaks through the gloom, they trudge patiently back to their desolated hearths.

One wonders if they can ever regain their traditional gaiety—or is it not a myth built up around the artificial life of Paris? The old people are very old, the young wan. One of the mayors of Valenciennes, a highly educated man, sought to explain his state of mind. "You must pardon me," he said. "I am not able to express myself clearly. For so long speech was repressed and one was permitted only to answer questions."

We are caught in a block of traffic. It is a one-track road and as we wait an endless procession goes by of marching men, lorries and wagons and limbers and guns. It is such a rare day as one encounters on the prairie in October when the unexpected warmth of the sun dispels the mists of a frosty night and the sky is blue and still. But here in this sad land of France the earth is green with sprouting grain and russet and gold still canopy the woods. From either direction little groups of peasants seek their homes, old men yoked to high two-wheeled hand-carts with women pushing behind, or carrying nothing more than bundles tied in ticking. Our soldiers pick up the children.

An old woman and her grandchild are passing from Maing to Famars and she tells her pitiable story. They had had the good fortune to remain in their home in Famars undisturbed—the grandfather almost decrepit. British troops captured the village and they were freed. But the enemy was throwing in gas-shells and it was ordered the villagers must go back behind our lines. The old man remained to guard his little property. By an ironic turn of fate the enemy recaptured the village and removed all left behind with their goods and chattels. "Why did they not leave me with my man?" she asked. "I am an old woman and have not long to live. It is better to die of the gas than return to nothing."

There was the baffling mystery of why these people passed in opposite directions—in all sorts of cross directions. From

Denain they were returning to Valenciennes and from Valenciennes to Denain, while in both were many people from far Cambrai. And here is the most brutal feature of the Boche policy. They deliberately transferred villages, tearing asunder the countryside that they might more easily control these destitutes set in strange places—the young men to work in the trenches and the young women in munition factories or worse. The village cleared, there followed the systematic sack; contents of value loaded on to government trains, the rest given to the men. And into this ruin other villages were transferred.

Presently we are in Famars. A long queue stretches back of the church. Within M. le Maire is distributing the iron rations provided by the British Army. One by one the villagers pass in and get their bully-beef, biscuit, tea, sugar, pepper and salt. In another corner the wants of the sick and of the very poor are looked after by an energetic officer of the Canadian Red Cross—soup, cocoa, and the like, gift of the people of Canada.

Shells have struck that church; four times it has changed hands. Under foot is a litter of plaster and straw where German soldiers have been billeted. Upon the walls the Stations of the Cross are shattered or awry. But what fitter use for a church? M. le Curé is all smiles. A woman, babe in arms, comes forward, on her face the resignation, the pity, of the Madonna.

These are the commonplaces of evacuated France. Terrible stories might be recounted; heroic episodes where the brutal fury of the invader has been defied to the end. But they are not needed to illustrate the splendor that emerges from the fundamental misery, the splendor of these patient people of France.

The whole country east of us is bisected with little rivers running through swamps and irrigation ditches. On our left front this has all been flooded and the going is very difficult for troops of our 3rd. Division. The enemy has improvised a line of rifle-pits, linking up the "fosses" of slag, each of these a miniature fortress.

Everything now depends on the work of the Canadian Engineers, supported by our Railway Troops and Labor Battalions. These push on indefatigably, often under fire, and in a remarkably short time succeed in restoring communications in a country where the enemy has blown every bridge and causeway, and even every length of steel.

By evening of Nov. 5 our line, with the 11th. Brigade on the right, the 12th. Brigade in the centre and the 8th. Brigade on the left, covering a battle front of about 12,000 yards, extended from the east of the Aunelle river between Marchipont and Angre, thence east of Quarouble, through Vicq and across the flooded area to where two miles south of Conde the 3rd. Canadian Division had bridged the Scheldt. The Aunelle, a tributary of the Grande Honelle, which it joins a little further north, is at this point the boundary between France and Belgium, and on the night of Nov. 5-6 the 87th. Battalion, Montreal Grenadier Guards, were the first Canadian troops to bivouac on Belgian soil since we had left the Ypres salient, after having crossed the river during the day by a brilliant manœuvre.

The following morning, Nov. 6, the 102nd. Battalion on our right passed through the 87th. and captured Basieux. On our left the 8th. Brigade, comprised of C.M.R. Battalions, after heavy fighting over the only practical causeways through swamps and marshes, captured Crespin and then made a dashing attack on the strongly held line of the Honneau river, effecting a crossing on the extreme left, thus turning the enemy's positions. The 12th. Brigade meanwhile had established itself in the southern outskirts of the French town of Quievrechain, and now in conjunction with the 8th. Brigade, completed its capture and crossed the Honelle into Belgian territory, the enemy having failed to blow the bridge at this point. By night we held the western outskirts of Quievrain, on the Mons road. Five hundred prisoners were captured.

On the night of Nov. 6-7 the 2nd. Canadian Division completed relief of the 4th. Canadian Division, which had been

in the thick of all the fighting since Sept. 27, and now went into rest.

We were now entering a thickly populated coal mining country, where the industrial villages melt one into another practically all the way to Mons. The enemy was fighting a delaying action, to enable him to evacuate his material. Faces of our weary mud-stained men who all day had toiled after the retreating Boche, light up at the news that comes over the French wireless that German envoys are on French soil, suppliants for peace.

About this time *Le Petit Parisien* publishes an article entitled, "The Canadians in the Great War." After quoting from the recent exchange of messages between Premier Sir Robert Borden and Sir Arthur Currie on the occasion of the anniversary of the arrival of the Canadian First Contingent in France, the article continues as follows:—"The message of General Currie goes a great way beyond the usual scope of such manifestoes. One cannot read it without profound emotion, so sternly grand are the sentiments he expresses. In the midst of the rumors and the agitation created by the enemy peace offensive the authoritative voice of the great Canadian General is lifted clear, vigorous and sincere."

After quoting from the message the passage wherein the Corps Commander enumerates the necessity of complete victory if peace is to be permanently restored and declares that the Canadian dead demand nothing less, the journal concludes:—"The generous and sublime prayer of those who perhaps are to die in the battle of tomorrow has been widely heard. Our own Armies, bound to silence, will read with gratitude this message of General Currie, for it reflects admirably all that lies repressed in the soul of our heroic soldiers."

The Corps Commander sums up the operations of this period as follows:—"The advance was continued in the face of stubborn resistance from enemy rearguards throughout Nov. 2 on the whole Corps front, and by nightfall had reached the line Marly-St. Saulve-Bas Amarais-Raucourt Chateau, all

inclusive. On the front of the 3rd. Canadian Division the advance was particularly difficult, the country being under water except where railway embankments, slag-heaps, and houses stood up out of the flood and afforded excellent cover for enemy machine-gunners and riflemen.

"Some stiff fighting took place when the advance was continued on Nov. 3, but in spite of this good progress was made, especially on the right on the front of the 11th. Canadian Infantry Brigade (Brig.-General V. W. Odlum), where the line was advanced 3,000 yards and the village of Estreux captured. Progress on the left was necessarily slower owing to the flooded nature of the ground.

"The front of the 3rd. Canadian Division had now become very extended, and on the night of Nov. 3-4 a portion of it, from Odomez to Fresnes—about a mile in extent—was handed over to the 52nd. Division of the VIII Corps.

"On Nov. 4 the line was carried forward about two miles on the front of the 4th. Canadian Division. The village of Onnaing and the western part of Rombies fell into our hands after severe fighting. The 3rd. Canadian Division was still forcing its way through marsh and water, and made good the Vicq-Thiers railway. On the extreme left of the 3rd. Canadian Division a strong point east of the Scheldt Canal was captured and the Escaupont-Quievrechain railway bridge was taken.

"During the early hours of Nov. 5 the 3rd. Canadian Division entered the town of Vicq, following the capture of two points of local tactical importance west of the town. A large portion of the line of the Escaupont-Quievrechain railway was also made good and the northern part of Quarouble captured during the day.

"The 4th. Canadian Division attacked on Nov. 5, and, clearing Rombies and the southern part of Quarouble, crossed the River Aunelle between Rombies and Marchipont, the enemy fighting very stubbornly to prevent our crossing. By this advance the first troops of the Canadian Corps crossed

into Belgian territory, the Aunelle River being the boundary at that point.

"The advance was resumed on Nov. 6 and important progress made. The villages of Marchipont, Baisieux, and the southern portion of Quievrechain were taken by the 4th. Canadian Division, while the 3rd. Canadian Division took the railway station and glassworks at Quievrechain and the northern part of the village, and also captured Crespin further north.

"The enemy's resistance was very stubborn. The XXII Corps on the right were forced to give up a portion of the ground gained and to withdraw to the west bank of Honelle River at Angre, in the face of severe counter-attacks.

"The 2nd. Canadian Division relieved the 4th. Canadian Division during the night of Nov. 6-7, and the latter was withdrawn to rest in the Anzin-Aubry area, just west of Valenciennes.

"On our right we were now getting into the heart of the Belgian coal district—a thickly populated area, where the numerous towns and villages, the coal mines, and the commanding slag-heaps complicated the task.

"The 2nd. and 3rd. Canadian Divisions attacked on the morning of Nov. 7 and, although by this time the weather had broken and the country was rapidly becoming thoroughly water-logged, good progress was made during the day, the enemy showing increasing signs of demoralization.

"The 2nd. Canadian Division, on the right, captured the sugar refinery northeast of Baisieux, the town of Elouges, and the many small settlements that surrounded it. In conjunction with the 3rd. Canadian Division Quievrain was taken, and an advance of about two and a half miles made. On the left the 3rd. Canadian Division, in addition to co-operating with the 2nd. Canadian Division in the capture of Quievrain, pushed along the Mons road for about 4,000 yards and took La Croix and Hensies, north of the road.

"The VIII Corps on our left had still been unable to

negotiate the Scheldt Canal. In order to better protect our rapidly lengthening left flank, the 3rd. Canadian Division was ordered to extend its attacks to the north, and, in addition to clearing the country south of the Conde-Mons Canal, to secure the crossings of the Canal."

CHAPTER VII

CAPTURE OF MONS

THE pursuit was continued on Nov. 8 and 9 and carried on throughout the day at great speed, the enemy being pushed through the industrial area, with no time to make a definite stand. Prisoners said they no longer had any stomach for fight. Discipline had broken down and for a month past there had been no saluting of officers. Officers accustomed to brutally ill-treat their men now walked in fear of a bayonet thrust through the back. Revolution was in the air. Nevertheless the enemy screen of machine-gunners still fought stoutly.

The 2nd. Canadian Division was now on our right, south of the Mons road, and the 3rd. Canadian Division working along that road and north to the Conde Canal. That famous cavalry regiment, the Fifth Lancers, had come temporarily under the Corps Command and together with the Corps Cavalry did invaluable work scouting along our flank.

The 2nd. Canadian Division had been at rest since Oct. 19 and its units were now to make perhaps the greatest advance in point of speed ever made by a fighting unit on the West Front. Thus the 4th. Brigade was in billets at Aniche on Nov. 1, its Battalions busily engaged in deciding their sporting championships. On Nov. 4 the entire Brigade was transferred by bus from Aniche to the Aubry-Henin area, whence the men marched on Nov. 6 to St. Saulve, taking part with the rest of the Division in the relief of the 4th. Canadian Division. From Anice via Valenciennes to Mons is a fine week's trip, to say nothing of the fighting, and the men were properly tired when the goal was reached. Part of the route was by road, but much of it was across country—top-boot deep in mud and slush. Always the roads were torn with shell holes

and freshly exploded mines, every cross-road presenting an enormous crater, hampering the troops as well as transport.

On Nov. 7 the 4th. Brigade moved to the Quievrain-Marchipont area, and the following day pressed on to the Elouges area, catching up to the 5th. Brigade and racing after the retiring enemy.

Both the 5th. and 6th. Brigades had had hard fighting through the industrial district which with its net work of railways and villages offered fine ground for defense. On Nov. 9 the important industrial centre of Wasmes-Paturages was freed, together with 30,000 civilians. The 4th. Brigade, with the 18th. Battalion, Western Ontario, on the right, and the 21st. Battalion, Eastern Ontario, on the left, passed through the 5th. Brigade and pushed on to the capture of Ciply, 3,500 yards due south of Mons.

Meantime on the left the 3rd. Canadian Division, with the 7th. Brigade in line, had pushed forward along the Mons road and, further north, had crossed the Conde canal over a bridge-head established during the night, bringing the line on the evening of Nov. 9 to east of Flenu and Jemappes, the latter village being 3,000 yards due west of Mons, while further north we had captured St. Ghislain and pushed out patrols towards the Bois de Ghlin, northwest of Mons, the Princess Patricias being on the right and 49th. Battalion, of Edmonton, on the left.

Hard fighting took place all along the line next day, Saturday, Nov. 10. During the night the enemy had moved back his guns east of Mons, but kept up a heavy fire from the hills to the east of the city, and maintained from Bois-le-Haut, just east of Hyon, a harassing machine-gun fire. On our right the 4th. Brigade attacked with the 20th. Battalion on the right and 19th. Battalion on the left, both Central Ontario. The enemy fought with the greatest tenacity, to give himself time no doubt to evacuate his material, and small progress was made. The 19th. in particular suffered severely, losing four officers killed and 53 other ranks killed and wounded.

In the afternoon the enemy massed for a counter-attack, but this was broken up by our artillery. Troops of this Brigade kept pushing forward during the evening and night, and by two o'clock next morning, Nov. 11, the 19th. Battalion had fought its way through Hyon towards the Mons-St. Symphorien road, where, supported by the 20th. on their right, they established a line, thus outflanking Mons from the east. At ten minutes past seven this morning Brigade Headquarters received the following message:—"Hostilities will cease at 11 a.m., Nov. 11. Troops will stand fast on the line reached at that time, which will be reported to Divisional Headquarters immediately. Defensive precautions will be maintained. There will be no intercourse with the enemy of any description."

Meanwhile quite as stiff opposition had faced the 7th. Brigade. On the Brigade right the Princess Patricias Light Infantry had pushed forward on the evening of Nov. 9 into Cuesmes, which lies just across the canal from Mons on the southwest. Working their way through the village, a party surprised and rushed an enemy outpost 200 yards from the city limit, capturing three prisoners. Under cover of darkness this patrol advanced up to the bank of the canal, where the enemy post could be heard talking. A skirmish ensued with an enemy party, but our men made good their retreat, taking with them two more prisoners. In retaliation the Boche attempted to rush this post no less than four times before midnight, bringing up a machine-gun.

On the following day, Nov. 10, the 42nd. Battalion relieved the P.P.L.I. on the outskirts of Mons, while on the Brigade left the Royal Canadian Regiment came up, captured the strongly held village of Ghlin, and working round the northwest of the city, established a post on the canal. That afternoon the enemy laid down a heavy bombardment, under cover of which he began his retirement to a new line on the high ground east of Mons. Both the 42nd. and Royal Canadian Regiment threw out patrols, who so soon as night

fell began working their way into the city. The enemy completed his evacuation before midnight of Nov. 10-11, and we followed him closely into the town. Soon every civilian was out of bed, and when by three o'clock in the morning the city was reported clear, a scene of rejoicing began which continued throughout the day, a great reception being given our troops.

A Canadian soldier who took part in the operation thus describes his impressions:—"The patrols reported back to their various headquarters that the enemy was established in a defense line five or six kilometres east of Mons itself and that he was very nervous, firing his machine-guns off in bursts and sending many flares up. Nothing further was done that night, there being no necessity to keep up with him at this stage of the advance. Outposts were kept up, however, and reliefs changed at usual intervals.

"The morning of Nov. 11 dawned like any other day of that time of the year, a dull, dreary, bleak looking sky overhead and a mist hanging low over the ground. The outposts had been shivering through the cold early hours of the morning with no knowledge of any such thing as an 'armistice' in their minds. Those that had slept relieved the night watchers and made note of the unusual quietness that pervaded the air, putting it down to one of the peculiarities of the day. Towards seven o'clock, the usual time for the day's advance to commence, a strange rumor ran through the ranks: 'No advance today.' 'What is the matter?' everybody queries 'Something is wrong—t'aint right,' was the only answer available.

"The morning gradually brightened and with it came a little word called 'armistice,' which everybody was doubtful about, but not a single soul let up on the purpose he was there for. Steel helmets were still worn and gas masks carried at the alert ready for anything the enemy might attempt to pull off. Rifles and revolvers were cleaned ready for future use, if need be. The posts were still on the job peering into the

morning mist for signs of activity on part of the Boche and performing their regular reliefs as though he was a matter of yards away. The artillery in the road was packing up preparing for another advance. The usual morning's activities were noticed everywhere. Because rumors of an armistice were in the air it did not mean that it was permissible to show signs of slackness.

"Everything went on as usual until official word came over the wire. Then, instead of going wild with joy, as some people will have it, a pronounced glow of satisfaction shone on the faces of all as though someone had told them the job had been well done, and hand-shakes all around with words of encouragement mixed with thumps on the back were the only visible signs of joy. Of cheers there were but few, the mind not being able to fully realize what 'armistice' meant. The subject was too big for them to grapple offhand and realize that no more would they have to dodge shells, bullets, bombs and other war paraphernalia which the Hun was in the habit of throwing around much to the troops' discomfort. No more would they have to strain their nerves to hold their ground while the drone of an enemy 'plane passed over their heads in the dark, dropping his bombs indiscriminately over the ground."

Sir Arthur Currie describes these events as follows:— "When the advance was continued on Nov. 8, the 3rd. Canadian Division pushed troops to the north, and by noon had secured the villages of Thievencelle and St. Aybert. Later in the day a footbridge was constructed across the Conde-Mons Canal, and under cover of darkness patrols crossed and a bridgehead was established.

"Further south the 3rd. Canadian Division had surprised the enemy in the villages of Montreuil-sur-Haine and Thulin at an early hour, and these towns were quickly captured. Pushing on from here the village of Hamin was taken, and by nightfall our troops were on the western outskirts of Boussu.

"The 2nd. Canadian Division met with strong opposition.

Good progress was, however, made, and by nightfall the important village of Dour and the smaller villages of Bois-de-Boussu, Petit Hornu, Bois-de-Epinois, and a portion of the Bois-de-l'Eveque were cleared.

"Resuming the advance on Nov. 9, the 2nd. Canadian Division captured Warquignies, Champ-des-Sait, Petit Wasmes, Wasmes-Paturages, La Bouverie, Lugies, Frameries, and Genly with little opposition. The advance made by this Division was over four miles through densely populated areas, the twin towns of Wasmes-Paturages combined having a population of about 30,000. By nightfall the 2nd. Canadian Division was clear of the main mining district.

"The 3rd. Canadian Division had on its left front crossed the River Haine during the night, north of Montreuil-sur-Haine, and later secured a further hold on the north bank of the Conde-Mons Canal near Le Petit Crepin. During the afternoon, further troops were sent across the Canal, and the villages of Petit Crepin, Ville Pommerœuil, Hautrage and Terte were taken. Further west, the patrols which had crossed the Canal on the previous day entered Pommerœuil and Bernissart.

"The 3rd. Canadian Division had also occupied Boussu, on its right, before daylight on the 9th. and rapid progress eastward was made during the day towards Mons, the villages of Cuesmes, Jemappes, Flenu, Hornu, Wasmes, Quaregon, Wasmuel, and St. Ghislain all being captured. The rapidity of our advance had evidently surprised and disorganized the enemy, although some opposition was met.

"By the morning of Nov. 10, the 52nd. Division (VIII Corps) had advanced and relieved the part of the 3rd. Canadian Division operating north of the left boundary of the Canadian Corps.

"The 3rd. Canadian Division's advance on Nov. 10 brought our troops to the southwestern outskirts of Mons, while the 2nd. Canadian Division had reached the Mons-Givry Road, outflanking the city from the south, but owing to

the large number of civilians still in the city, it was not possible for us to bombard the town. To the north of the Conde-Mons Canal, a further advance was made and the village and Fosse of Ghlin secured.

"During the night of Nov. 10-11 the Divisions resumed their advance, and immediately after dark the troops of the 7th. Canadian Infantry Brigade (Brig.-General J. A. Clark) commenced to close in. The villages of Nimy and Petit Nimy were quickly captured and an entry into Mons by way of the Railway Station was effected before midnight. By 6 a.m. on Nov. 11 the stubborn machine-gun resistance had been broken and the town cleared of the enemy.

"The 2nd. Canadian Division had, during the night, taken the Bois-le-Haut, a wood crowning a large hill on the south-eastern outskirts of Mons, thus securing the right flank of the 3rd. Canadian Division. The capture of this high ground forced upon the enemy a further retirement, and our troops, still pressing on, reached and captured St. Symphorien and Fbg. Barthelmy by 8 a.m.

"In the meantime, word had been received through First Army that hostilities would cease at 11 a.m. on November 11, the Armistice having been signed in acceptance of our terms.

"To secure a satisfactory line for the defense of Mons, our line was further advanced, and the Bois-d'Havre, Bois-du-Rapois and the town and villages of Havre, Bon Vouloir, La Bruyere, Maisieres, St. Denis and Obourg were captured before hostilities ceased."

The Grande Place of Mons is thronged. Here at 11 o'clock—the "zero" hour of peace—as the "Cease Fire!" sounds, the Mayor presents to Brig.-General J. A. Clark of the 7th. Canadian Infantry Brigade the keys of the city in honor of its recapture this morning by units of that Brigade. Bands play "La Brabanconne," Belgium's national anthem, and "O Canada." Pipers of the 42nd. Battalion, of Montreal, lead the march past, because it was the good fortune of that

unit to first enter the city. This is the 5th. Royal Highlanders of Canada, affiliated with the famous Black Watch, both privileged to wear the Hackle Highland Scarlet, and it is a noteworthy coincidence that the parent unit, 42nd. Battalion of the British Army, was the first to leave England on Aug. 12, 1914, and the last infantry unit to retire from Mons.

By another happy good fortune, the British Field Battery, last to leave Mons on Aug. 23, 1914, took part in this attack and actually finished in the identical battery position whence it had retired in 1914.

One other coincidence is tragic in character. The first shot fired at Mons in 1914 was by the 5th. Lancers, now attached to the Canadian Corps, and an officer who fought here then was killed an hour and a half before the armistice.

Many things have happened in those four years, from Mons to the Marne and back again, not the least significant being the brotherhood in arms of the Canadian Corps and the British Army.

Shortly after noon the streets are placarded with a proclamation, "To the People of Mons," signed by the College of the Burgomaster and Aldermen—By MM. Jean Lescarts, Fulgence Masson, Leon Save, Victor Maistriau and Henri Rolland; and countersigned by the Secretary of the Commune, M. Gaston Talaupe. It runs as follows:—

"After 51 months of suffering caused by the iniquitous, the pitiless and insolent occupation of the German Army, the City of Mons is at length delivered by the heroism of the British Army, which, at the hour of the Armistice, completes its series of victories in the identical place where, on Aug. 23, 1914, it first engaged the enemy.

"The 3rd. Canadian Division, at cost of heavy sacrifices, entered the city at three o'clock this morning, thus avenging by a striking success the retreat of 1914. Honor and thanks be to it!

"The Armistice is signed. The German Army has capitulated; brutal force is destroyed; justice and right triúmph;

Belgium is strengthened and fortified by the terrible ordeal she has passed through.

"Our people have supported with dignity and courage the sufferings of the occupation. We are convinced that in this hour of joy and triumph they will observe a like restraint and self-command.

"We depend on the goodwill of all to maintain order. We also ask our people to return as soon as possible to work. Losses inflicted on us by the war are great, and the co-operation of all our goodwill, all our energy, is necessary to heal over quickly the wounds it has caused.

"In this solemn hour our infinite gratitude goes to the Allied Armies and, among them, from the bottom of our heart, to our valiant Belgian Army and to the King, its heroic Chief.

"Long live the King! Long live the Belgian Nation!"

Such was the dramatic end to the work of the Canadian Corps in the Hundred Days—from Amiens along the Roye road; then from Arras through the Drocourt-Queant line to the Canal du Nord; across the Canal du Nord, over the hard field of Cambrai, and so through Denain and Valenciennes to Mons. The final operation is thus described in the narrative of the First Army:—

"November 11—During this day the 2nd. Canadian Division had gained the high ground south and east of Mons and were forcing the Germans to withdraw. At dawn on Nov. 11 the 3rd. Canadian Division entered the town and a line was established east of it. Fighting had been carried on all that night and dead Germans still lay in the streets and were kicked by the inhabitants as they lay, while the carillon of the belfry played "Tipperary"—the players having silently practised the tune in anticipation of the British arrival. The last round fired by the Canadian artillery had shot off the arm of a German staff officer in a Headquarters Chateau by Hill 85 to the east of Mons.

"Early on Nov. 11 Canadian Corps Headquarters were

established in the Grande Place at Mons and the first message there received was to the effect that the armistice was signed and that hostilities were to cease at 11 o'clock.

"Sir Douglais Haig's last communiqué stated, 'Canadian troops of the First Army have captured Mons.' "

CHAPTER VIII

THE MONS ROAD

ON the morning of Sunday, Nov. 10, the President of the French Republic makes his official entry into Valenciennes. A dais has been erected in front of the fine old Hotel de Ville, facing the great square of the Place d'Armes, and here come little girls, bedecked in white, carrying bouquets of flowers. Here, too, gather a galaxy of military notables; Army and Corps Commanders, our good neighbors, come to pay their tribute; and outstanding among them is Sir Arthur Currie and his staff, including the Prince of Wales and Prince Arthur of Connaught.

The President replies in eloquent terms to the address of welcome of the civic authorities. After eulogizing the stout heart of its people through the long years of captivity, M. Poincare goes on to congratulate the Canadian Corps on its successful efforts resulting in the liberation of the city. It is with special pleasure he has heard that Valenciennes had been delivered from the enemy by the Canadians. They are very close to France. Once a daughter of France, Canada has become one of the great British Dominions, but she has preserved the ideals dear to both nations. She has never forgotten France and today forms a link binding together France and the British Empire.

When the war began, the President points out, Canada was first of the Dominions to pledge her aid; she has never turned back, and ever since Canadians have shed their blood freely for freedom and for France. Proud today must be the mothers of Canada in the conspicuous share of their sons in bringing the enemy to defeat and disaster. When the war is over and France restored to prosperity and happiness, she will never forget Canada and her gallant soldiers. He concluded by

announcing a gift of money from the Canadian Red Cross to the stricken people of Valenciennes.

Driving up and down these roads, threading our way through the thousands of refugees returning to their homes, perhaps no cry is more common, more spontaneous and sincere, than "Vive les braves Canadiens!" It is a cry that comes from the heart.

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The Mons Road! What tragic significance lies in those three words! Pictures they present of those glorious days of August, 1914, when the flower of the British Army threw itself in the path of the invader, halted there the wheel of his victorious chariot, and afforded France a breathing space to make ready for the Battle of the Marne.

For four years these cobbled pavements ring to the hoof of the conqueror; for him it is the Road to Paris. And then August, 1918, issues in a change, a cold blast from the direction of Amiens. The tide of traffic sets in the reverse direction. Back with all their impedimenta of war come those discomforted legions. Back too with them, brittle thread woven into their iron texture, come the French people of the evacuated areas. The Mons Road, clogged with sweating horses and cursing men, is filled to overflowing with the flotsam of deserted villages. Many of these poor weaklings are crowded into the ditches and there die.

Helpless witness of these horrors was the good Curé of Quievrechain. Fourteen thousand people, its entire population, were evacuated from the industrial town of Anzin alone, he tells us, and ordered to march on foot seventy kilometres to Mons. Even as they passed him, their journey hardly started, twenty died. One women pushed her cart whereon lay the body of her husband. In a ditch a baby lived upon the breast of its dead mother.

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Quievrechain and Quievrain are two villages on the road from Valenciennes to Mons, forming indeed a continuous

street, divided by the bridge of the Honelle river—a stream, almost imperceptible though it be, that marks nevertheless the boundary between France and Belgium. On the occasion one has in mind—this morning of Sunday, Nov. 10, 1918—the transition is sharply accentuated by national bunting; Quievrechain covers its wounds with the tricolor, Quievrain flaunts its happiness in black, yellow and red.

That description is just, for this trifling stream not only marks the boundary of two states but is the rubicon of Hun hate for stricken France. Not river nor bunting are needed to advise the traveller he is passing from France into Belgium. Quievrechain is a ruin; Quievrain inviolate. Back to their desolated hearths struggle the evacuated French; the Belges of Mons, a more happy fate, have been left undisturbed in their bright homes—theirs has been the travail of the spirit but not of the body. In a short mile one passes from a ruined French ironworks to a humming Belgian factory. He confiscated the output of the French coal mines and destroyed them as he retired; in Mons he paid a good price for 12% of the output and left the plant intact. It is true that he stripped thousands of Belgian factories and took their machinery to the Fatherland, but, except in scattered cases, there is here but little wanton destruction, no deliberate ruin of the countryside.

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To return to our road. The day is misty, but from Jemappes one can make out the great belfry of Mons. We walk forward. Shells are falling in the lower slopes of the village. Groups of frantic peasants run from their houses up steep alleys to the Mons Road. There is a roar and a crash, and a lorry is engulfed in the smoke of the explosion. Swaying a little, it dashes on its way, but it has knocked down a civilian carrying a small boy, and he rushes wildly up and down trying barred doors for shelter. The child screams pitiably. Cries and moans come from down the alley. A shell has burst among a group of civilians. Two children are dead; a woman, clutching an infant, staggers to her feet and falls again.

As is often the case, this support line is a hotter zone than up forward. Up there is machine-gunning and sniping—they have snipers in the belfry—but there is little shelling. It is all too close with only the thread of the canal between the opposing lines. On right and left are great "fosses" of slag, pyramids of the plain. We pass villagers at their door watching the pageant of battle, careless of danger. Children run across the street of Cuesmes. This is the courage of ignorance. Except for the already confused tradition of the Great Retreat, these people have seen nothing of war. And war four years ago was in its infancy.

Luncheon at Cuesmes with a Battalion Headquarters, where the news is received with some scepticism that the Armistice will be signed tomorrow morning. One of them has come right through the war with his Battalion—rare good fortune. What an experience! These gallant young regimental officers daily quaff the wine of battle, nor ever know what lies at bottom of the cup. There is not in the whole world a braver, cleaner, more inspiring society than this of the Battalion. They are fatalists. Few have expected to find themselves alive on the day of days. They have seen so many comrades, trusted, honored and loved, snatched from them in the heyday of youth and enthusiasm, of honors and brave plans for the future; and at any turn of the wheel up might come their number. So they are not willing to believe the agony is over. "Touch wood," says one.

Ahead the streets are deserted. Except under screen of buildings they are enfiladed by fire from across the canal. From the "O-Pip" of a Company Headquarters one has a fine view of the belfry. The hand of the great clock points an hour ahead of our time—Boche time.

We pass an Octroi post—we are in Mons. Ahead is a little square. Half a dozen enemy dead lie there, the patrol overwhelmed in our rush of the previous night. In the early morning they counter-attacked, bringing a machine-gun within 20 yards of our post—so close are the lines. From out

of the square a broad boulevard runs down to the canal, bare of all life, swept by the machine-guns of each side. Under its fine sweep of plane trees lies a tangle of trolley wires.

That was the last one is to see of war. The short day is closing as we turn back to Jemappes.

. . . . . .

In the Place d'Armes of Valenciennes next morning massed Canadian bands issue in the Armistice to the strains of patriotic airs. The occasion is past all demonstration. Our men quietly discuss the terms and the report that the Canadian Corps is to march to the Rhine.

Soon we are again upon the Mons Road, with us a little priest of Valenciennes, a returned refugee, now intent upon an errand of mercy. He is delirious with joy. Long lines of guns, transports and marching troops meet and pass the pitiable stream of evacuées. To all he cries the good news, calling out to soldier and civilian alike, "La guerre fini a onze heures." This refrain he chants until he is hoarse, until his voice becomes a husky joyous croak. Once he stops to point out new-turned earth by the roadside. "There I helped bury a woman and her child who died upon this road," he says.

It is with a passion of regret that we pass again the Honelle River. Behind is France and a people Canadian soldiers have learned in these four years to love and revere.

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You pass along this strip of road from France into Belgium —from ruin into prosperity, from dire want into relative plenty. Valenciennes, beautiful city, suffered heavy requisitions; its works of art looted; its people evacuated. It is sad to-day. There is apathy among the remnant of citizenship.

But in Mons it is very different. So great is its place in recent history that one looks to find it scarred and warworn. It is a pleasant surprise. Cattle graze in the meadows. French cities far removed from the battle zone can show no such bright and engaging front, no shops of such abundant and tempting display, nor a people as cheerful and prosperous. The women

are handsomely gowned, and the children, jolly little souls, fat and rosy. Young men are about. The Boche made himself very agreeable.

All this was policy. Until the past few months the Boche counted on incorporating three Belgian provinces in the Fatherland. He played up to the people deliberately. Yet cajoleries failed here as completely as did intimidation and terror there. The flaming loyalty of these brave Walloons, centering in the heroic figures of their King and Queen, was not to be bought by gifts nor devitalised by coddling.

Yet under the surface there is much misery. Beggars haunt the streets. Many of the able-bodied men, who refused to work in the factories for the invader, were taken into Germany and will never return, and their families are destitute. Mons, too, has been the focus of refugees from a wide area and it is said 50 evacuées die here daily. The kind Belges do everything possible, but they are weakened in body and broken in spirit.

. . . . . .

Mons is *en fete,* in gala attire; and we might be part of a carnival show as we thread our way up the narrow street amid a populace crazed with joy. They press upon our men with wine and gifts; every soldier wears a red carnation, stuck above his ear. In the afternoon the City of Mons tenders a formal reception to the Corps Commander and his staff. The streets are gay with bunting, black, yellow and red predominating, though there is a fair sprinkling of the tricolor, for these loyal-hearted Walloons are French in sympathy as well as race, and all join fervently in the "Marseillaise." Representative Canadian troops line the great square, the guard of honor being furnished by the 5th. Lancers.

Replying to the address of welcome, Sir Arthur Currie says that the men of the Canadian Corps regard the occasion as a signal honor. It was on Belgian soil they had first fought in the Second Battle of Ypres and it was fitting that they should there conclude their victorious campaign. He then presents to

the City of Mons the Canadian Corps' Flag, which the Mayor informs him will be ever gratefully treasured in its archives.

We pass on to our forward positions. It is an extraordinary experience. The front line is as silent as the grave. Our outposts stand chatting, boldly silhouetted against the skyline. No longer death screams overhead nor speeds its whistling shaft. Our guns are shrouded in their tarpaulins, stricken dumb, and the attendant crews move about mechanically or sit and smoke their pipes, unheedful of their target. It all seems unnatural, so entirely has war become second nature.

As we pass back in the darkening night over the Mons Road, lights flash out. Mons is all aglow. To walk boldly in lighted streets and recognise a passing acquaintance is a unique experience, for nothing has been more depressing in those long years than this groping of one's way in the dark for fear of Heine and his bombs. These lights stand for something foreign and strange in our lives. They stand for peace.

. . . . . .

The days that follow are a tumult of sensation and emotion. Reports come from Paris and London and our Canadian cities of joyous transports and feverish demonstration. Superficially these are signally lacking within the ranks of the Canadian Corps. Our men, still laden with their packs, tin hats and rifles, are smiling and happy, but seemingly unelated. There has been no relaxation of that sturdy discipline which is the great strength of the Corps, nor have there been wild scenes accompanying relief of tension. This may be puzzling, but looking below the surface there are good reasons why the Canadian Corps received its crowning victory as soberly as it has its successes of the past.

First is the fact that it fought its way to the Armistice. Canadian soldiers died in their duty within a few hours of the cessation of hostilities. On the previous day they encountered opposition stiffer than any since the fall of Valenciennes. Bitter sad it was that these men should fall with the end so near. But it was essential to secure so impor-

tant a strategic and tactical point as Mons should the Armistice proposals fall through. Even on the Sunday, few soldiers in the field believed in it, and in the London clubs they were betting odds against it. The position of the Canadian Corps has been well put by Sir Arthur Currie:—"The reason Mons was taken was that we obeyed the orders of Marshal Foch that we should go on until we were ordered to stop. That is a thing that means much for Canada. It was a proud thing for our race that we were able to finish the war where we began it, and that we, the young whelps of the old lion, were able to take the ground lost in 1914."

Then again the roadside scenes sadden their hearts. Amid that misery rejoicing has no place. Beyond these causes is the sense of responsibility. The Canadian Corps has been signally honored and it has its own high tradition. This earnest spirit is well brought out at a dinner given at Anzin by the Colonel and officers of the 54th., Kootenay, Battalion, to which Corps, Division, Brigade and sister Battalion Commanders were invited. Invitations had been issued before the Armistice, but now the last gun had fired.

A General Officer present said that this was the time of test, and that the same ideals that had led the Corps to victory must inspire it now. The reputation of the Canadian Corps rested in the last analysis on the type of men in the ranks. Gaily they faced danger and in times of stress never were such stickers. There could be no greater privilege than to lead these Canadian boys, and they could now be depended upon precisely in the same degree as in the heat of battle.

A Battalion Commander was applauded when he said that men of the Canadian Corps must stand together in Canada, actuated by the same grave sense of responsibility they had shown in war. They would keep that good fellowship built up during the years of war and apply it to the honor and betterment of their country, and in this they would have with them the people at home who so loyally and with such unstinted faith had supported them throughout. The silent hosts of their

dead, who at Ypres and at Vimy, the Somme, Passchendaele and since, had laid down their lives for this cause, would march with them to its fruition.

. . . . . .

Mons is an ancient city of crooked streets winding about the hill whereon is perched the old citadel and whence rises the venerable belfry tower. We climb aloft, up flight on flight of winding stairs, of steep ladders; past the perch of the carillon player—sweat pouring from his forehead this enthusiast plies with racing hand and foot his multiple levers; ponderous handwrought iron levers, creaking primitive mechanical devices, that yet for centuries have sent silver strains floating over the countryside; an enthusiast indeed, and now, with music borrowed from one of our bands, pealing out Canadian national airs. And so up and up to the leaded rooftop, there to survey a far horizon. Most immediate below is a vista of roofs—roofs red and brown, covered with lichen; roofs of slate, purple and gray; roofs high-pitched and huddled, their sharp gables jutting out at all angles. So the old town; beyond are the boulevards and chateaux of the rich.

Due west, a thin line aflame to the sunset, runs the Canal de Conde; in this direction it is very flat, save for the "fosses," the pyramidal slag-heaps of Cuesmes and Jemappes, etched against the glow,where our men battled their way in.

To the east lie hills, catching the declining rays above the darkening plain. Emerging abruptly from this flat expanse there is something about them of mystery; they have no secret now, but standing on the belfry of Mons one can recapture something of the dark and hidden significance that clothed their slopes in those days of August, 1914.

. . . . . .

On Friday, Nov. 15, a great military celebration is held in Mons, when a number of Army chiefs are present, with the Corps Commander and the Prince of Wales. As a mark of appreciation the City of Mons has renamed the Place de la Bavarie, where Canadian troops first entered, the Place du

Canada, and a gold medal is struck and presented bearing the following inscription:—"La Ville de Mons au Lieut.-General Sir Arthur W. Currie en souvenir de la liberation de la cité par le Corps Canadien." At a later date the King of the Belgians made his state entry and congratulates Sir Arthur Currie on the achievements of the Canadian Corps—"unsurpassed by any Corps in Europe."

On the morning of Sunday, Nov. 17, the Canadian Corps holds in the theatre of Mons a service of thanksgiving to Almighty God for the blessing of victory. It is a solemn and wonderful occasion. In that hour expression is given to all the pent-up emotions of the past weeks. The simple service with its grave and serious note utters aloud the deep feelings of Canadian soldiers in the hour of victory.

Fifty thousand Canadians cannot take part in this service, says the preacher. They sleep in foreign soil, but they did not die in vain. We have kept the faith with them. Their sacrifice and that of thousands more who must return maimed and crippled have brought us to this day, and they have set their true mark on the page of Canadian history. We thank God for these gallant men who laid down their lives and we can best requite them by carrying back with us the high ideal that has made the Canadian Corps a shining sword of righteousness.

The Te Deum is sung, music being supplied by the band of the Royal Canadian Regiment. As the congregation files out there comes floating down from the belfry of Mons a clear and sweet refrain, "O Canada," and this orchestra of silver tongues peals out across the countryside Canada's message of faith and sacrifice.

CHAPTER IX

INTO GERMANY

JUST a hundred days had elapsed since the Canadian Corps moved from Arras into the Amiens show up to the capture of Mons. In those days the Corps had gone far; had struck often and hard; had in a dozen pitched battles met and overwhelmed the foe; and proved itself in the eyes of Europe and the world a weapon for the offensive of temper unsurpassed.

Sir Arthur Currie thus sums up the results attained:— "Between Oct. 11 and Nov. 11 the Canadian Corps had advanced to a total depth exceeding ninety-one thousand yards (91,000 yards), through a country in which the enemy had destroyed railways, bridges and roads, and flooded large areas to further impede our progress.

"To the normal difficulties of moving and supplying a large number of men in a comparatively restricted area were added the necessity of feeding several hundred thousand people, chiefly women and children, left in a starving condition by the enemy. Several deaths by starvation, or through suffering consecutive to privation, were experienced in villages and towns which, being kept under hostile shell fire and defended by machine-guns, could not be captured rapidly by our troops.

"The fighting was light up to the Scheldt Canal, but stiffened perceptibly from there on until the capture of Mons, and added a great deal to the physical exertion caused by such a long advance in adverse weather. . . .

"When it is recalled that since Aug. 8 the Canadian Corps had fought battles of the first magnitude, having a direct bearing on the general situation, and contributing to an extent difficult to realise to the defeat of the German Armies in the field, this advance under most difficult conditions constitutes a deci-

sive test of the superior energy and power of endurance of our men.

"It is befitting that the capture of Mons should close the fighting records of the Canadian Troops, in which every battle they fought is a resplendent page of glory.

"The Canadian Corps was deeply appreciative of the honor of having been selected amongst the first for the task of establishing and occupying the bridgeheads east of the Rhine.

"A long march of 170 miles under difficult conditions was ahead of them, but they ungrudgingly looked forward to what had always been their ultimate objective—the occupation of German soil.

"Between Aug. 8 and Nov. 11 the following had been captured:

Prisoners	31,537
Guns (Heavy and Field)	623
Machine Guns	2,842
Trench Mortars (Heavy and Light)	336

"Over 500 square miles of territory and 228 cities, towns and villages had been liberated, including the cities of Cambrai, Denain, Valenciennes and Mons.

"From Aug. 8 to Oct. 11 not less than 47 German Divisions had been engaged and defeated by the Canadian Corps, that is, nearly a quarter of the total German Forces on the Western Front.

"After Oct. 11 the disorganisation of the German Troops on our front was such that it was difficult to determine with exactitude the importance of the elements of many Divisions engaged.

"I desire to record here my deep appreciation of the services of Brig.-General N. W. Webber, B.G.G.S., Canadian Corps, and of the generous efforts and untiring zeal of the General Officers, Regimental Officers, the heads of all Arms, Services and Branches, and the members of the various Staffs."

Until the opening of these operations, Vimy was properly regarded as the greatest achievement of the Canadian Corps, and a comparison is of interest. The Corps always regards that battle as having begun on April 9, 1917, and finished on May 5 following, after our troops had consolidated Fresnoy. It was after that date that Divisions begun to be relieved, and that Lieut.-General Sir Julian Byng issued his Corps Order. The deepest penetration at Vimy was 10,000 yards, the attack being made on a front of 7,000 yards, when we captured 67 guns, 7,000 prisoners, and defeated nine German Divisions, but at a cost of over 20,000 casualties.

In the Amiens show, Aug. 8-22, we attacked on a front of over 8,000 yards, widening out to 10,000 yards, capturing 196 guns, nearly 10,000 prisoners, and defeated 16 enemy Divisions, at a cost of 11,706 casualties.

The Arras show, including the capture of the Drocourt-Queant line, opened on Aug. 26 and concluded on Sept. 4. We attacked on a front of about 8,000 yards, but this was increased to 12,000 yards as we progressed and drove a salient into the enemy defense. We penetrated 20,000 yards, fought 18 German Divisions, and captured 98 guns with about 9,000 prisoners at cost of 8,999 casualties.

During the hard-fought Battle of Cambrai we penetrated between Sept. 27 and Oct. 12 30,000 yards on a front of about 9,000 yards, capturing over 120 guns and between eight and nine thousand prisoners, besides inflicting extremely heavy casualties on the 13 Divisions, reinforced by 13 independent Machine-Gun Battalions, the enemy brought into line against us, our own casualties being 15,106.

In each of these three battles, therefore, results attained were greater than those of Vimy, fine victory though that was; and in their cumulative effect there is, of course, no comparison. They broke the back of enemy defense on the West Front.

In the period, Aug. 8-Nov. 11, the Canadian Corps fired off over one-quarter of all the ammunition used by all the Bri-

tish Armies on the West Front in the same period. The following table of captures by British and Allied Armies from July 18-Nov. 11, 1918, is of interest:—

	PRISONERS	GUNS
British Armies	188,700	2,840
French Armies	139,000	1,880
American Armies ..	43,300	1,421
Belgian Armies	14,500	474
Total	385,500	6,615

The contribution of the Canadian Corps to the British total, as stated above, but confined to the period of the Hundred Days, was 31,537 prisoners and 623 heavy and field guns, besides over three thousand machine-guns and trench mortars.

These figures speak for themselves. And yet, relative to the task performed, our casualties were by no means heavy. It will be of value to record here the two appended tables. "A" is a summary of Canadian casualties by years, but in comparing 1916 and 1917 it is to be remembered that the 4th. Canadian Division served in France less than five months in the former year; "B" is a summary of Canadian casualties by operations as from Aug. 8 to Nov. 11, 1918, inclusive:—

"A"

SUMMARY OF CANADIAN CASUALTIES BY YEARS

	OFFICERS			OTHER RANKS			TOTAL
	KD.	WD.	MS.	KD.	WD.	MS.	
1915	121	329	22	2,596	9,136	1,861	14,065
1916	556	1,399	115	10,183	36,339	4,508	53,100
1917	610	1,779	102	11,235	44,515	4,324	62,565
1918	737	2,237	70	10,511	45,077	1,609	60,241
Total	2,024	5,744	309	34,525	135,067	12,302	189,971

"B"

Summary of Casualties, Aug. 8-Nov. 11, 1918

Casualties reported from noon Aug. 8 to noon Aug. 26, 1918

	OFFICERS			OTHER RANKS			
	K.	W.	M.	K.	W.	M.	TOTAL
1st. Canadian Division	38	132	–	565	2,540	95	3,370
2nd. Canadian Division	30	107	–	344	2,210	—	2,691
3rd. Canadian Division	25	93	5	378	1,967	118	2,586
4th. Canadian Division	37	108	4	409	2,019	220	2,797
Canadian Corps Troops	1	19	–	29	210	3	262
	131	459	9	1,725	8,946	436	11,706

Casualties reported from noon Aug. 26 to noon Sept. 5, 1918

	OFFICERS			OTHER RANKS			
	K.	W.	M.	K.	W.	M.	TOTAL
1st. Canadian Division	33	124	1	217	1,118	81	1,574
2nd. Canadian Division	22	139	–	347	2,519	440	3,467
3rd. Canadian Division	30	107	–	342	2,118	121	2,718
4th. Canadian Division	26	117	1	139	751	37	1,071
Canadian Corps Troops	1	13	–	11	142	2	169
	112	500	2	1,056	6,648	681	8,999

Casualties reported from noon Sept. 5, to noon Sept. 27, 1918

	OFFICERS			OTHER RANKS			
	K.	W.	M.	K.	W.	M.	TOTAL
1st. Canadian Division	6	20	–	356	1,583	—	1,965
2nd. Canadian Division	5	37	1	110	1,113	3	1,269
3rd. Canadian Division	5	44	–	114	667	19	849
4th. Canadian Division	9	49	–	504	2,293	74	2,929
Canadian Corps Troops	1	9	–	17	136	—	163
	26	159	1	1,101	5,792	96	7,175

Casualties reported from noon Sept. 27 to noon Oct. 12, 1918

	OFFICERS			OTHER RANKS			
	K.	W.	M.	K.	W.	M.	TOTAL
1st. Canadian Division	34	181	9	522	2,857	521	4,124
2nd. Canadian Division	16	87	–	155	1,103	25	1,386
3rd. Canadian Division	46	141	6	578	2,966	347	4,084
4th. Canadian Division	66	197	2	647	3,880	254	5,146
Canadian Corps Troops	4	18	–	42	296	6	366
	166	624	17	1,944	11,202	1,153	15,106

Casualties reported from noon Oct. 12 to noon Nov. 15, 1918

	OFFICERS			OTHER RANKS			
	K.	W.	M.	K.	W.	M.	TOTAL
1st. Canadian Division	6	22	–	52	298	51	429
2nd. Canadian Division	6	34	2	204	1,372	125	1,743
3rd. Canadian Division	8	26	2	79	433	6	554
4th. Canadian Division	7	88	1	196	1,191	19	1,502
Canadian Corps Troops	5	13	–	9	162	2	191
	32	183	5	540	3,456	203	4,419

Aug. 8-Aug. 26	11,706
Aug. 26-Sept. 5	8,999
Sept. 5-Sept. 27	7,175
Sept. 27-Oct. 12	15,106
Oct. 12-Nov. 15	4,419
	46,405

. . . . . .

One last scene. It is the morning of Dec. 4, 1918. Corps Headquarters after leaving Mons is established successively at Gosselies, near Charleroi, famous for its glass factories, now stripped bare, and at Huy, between Namur and Liege, a mediaeval town of rare beauty grouped around the towering

citadel that here frowns down upon the wide and tranquil Meuse.

Thence we move, an arduous march, up into the wild fastnesses of the Ardennes to the village of Vielsalm. It lies in a little valley, and through it runs a brawling stream, on every hand shouldering hills girt with pine woods. Here are many slate mines, and from these, out of this all but inaccessible country, the methodical Boche has taken the machinery.

It is a desolate vista of mountain and heath, home of the stag and wild boar. Here, too, faggot-cutters ply their hard calling and peasants scratch a livelihood from the reluctant soil. Scattered about in this famous hunting country are the shooting lodges of wealthy European sportsmen, and in one of these, where now the Corps Commander has his headquarters, the Crown Prince lay hid during those fateful days preceding the armistice, and thence escaped into Holland.

A few miles east the hamlet of Poteau, a half-dozen scattered cottages, marks the international boundary. It is raining. Mist swathes the rolling hills. The Corps Commander stands at the cross-road to take the salute of our men marching into Germany. By his side is Sir Archibald Macdonell, G.O.C., 1st. Canadian Division, and the Canadian Light Horse supplies the escort. Fifty yards east is a German custom-house, where congregate curiously, half-fearfully, German women and children, and with them the much-uniformed customs' officer.

It is an impressive sight, here at noon in the rain at Poteau —impressive to the imagination even more than to the eye. As they march past, these troops of the 1st. Canadian Division —the 2nd. Canadian Division crosses the boundary further south—led by the 3rd. Battalion, Central Ontario, and the 4th. and 2nd. Batteries, C.F.A., it is the outward and visible sign of victory emerged at last from the dark years.

The 1st. Canadian Division is to cross the Rhine at Cologne, the 2nd. Canadian Division at Bonn. It was first proposed that the entire Canadian Corps proceed to the Rhine,

but difficulties of transport and supply led to a material reduction in the numbers of British Divisions allocated to the occupation of the Rhine bridgeheads. But even with its representation thus cut in half, the Canadian Corps is liberally treated. Sympathy at this hour is with the gallant 3rd. and 4th. Canadian Divisions thus denied a legitimate ambition. But these, though they remain behind in Belgium, participate nevertheless in spirit in this triumphal march. Their desert is not less; they have proved their valor and tenacity on many a bloody field. They share in the honor common to all and are content in the knowledge that it redounds to the high repute of Canada.

A fine driving rain beats down. The country road is ankle deep in mud. The head of the column comes in sight, the men in full marching order, their oilskin sheets over their shoulders. "Eyes left; e-y-e-s l-e-f-t," runs down the line. Through the mist the figure of the Corps Commander looms, erect, a little stern as is his wont, the familiar figure that on many a battlefield has proved a strength and inspiration to his men. Now, as here in this place he returns the salute, it is surely with the sense of a great task well done.

The band of the 3rd. Battalion strikes up the "Maple Leaf," and the threadbare melody achieves dignity in this windswept space—this frontierland between war and peace—becomes poignant and noble.

We ride a little way into Germany and then turn back to Vielsalm. The rain has stopped and the sun is sinking into the west; into a bed of heather and purple mist. At the same moment he is beginning to cast his pale and horizontal rays over the distant Canadian scene, where children rub sleepy eyes in greeting of a new day.

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